

A
 Short Account
 OF THE
 LIFE AND DEATH
 OF
 Mrs. Sarah Kilham.

TO WHICH IS ADDED,
 THREE SERMONS,
 Preached on the Day She was Interred.

By ALEXANDER KILHAM,
Minister of the Gospel.

For me to live is Christ, and to die is gain, Phil. i. 21.
 Let me die the Death of the Righteous, and let my last End be like his,
 Numb. xxiii. 10.

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of the
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of the
House of Commons
and
the
House of Lords
on the
Petition of the
British Museum
for the
Establishment of a
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of the
United Kingdom
in the
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By ALB. SMITH, Esq.
of the Inner Temple, Esq.
Attorney at Law
for the said British Museum
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THE
LIFE AND DEATH

OF

Mrs. Sarah Kilham, &c.

SHE was born at Pickering, in Yorkshire, on the 9th Oct. 1756. Her father was Captain of an American merchant ship, which prevented him from being much with his family. After escaping a number of dangers at sea, he was seized with a fever in one of the American ports, and after languishing a few days, he died. As he had long feared the Lord, and walked in the comforts of the Holy Spirit, death had no terrors to his mind. He rejoiced in the hope of the glory of God; and quitted this wilderness, to join the anthems of the skies. On his being first seized with the complaint that removed him from this world, he was taken to a gentleman's house, who behaved with the greatest tenderness to him, and procured all the medical help the place afforded. And when he was called to his reward, he kindly took care to have him decently buried, without charging any thing to the fatherless and widow. He also secured the property and writings which belonged to the deceased; and, after packing every thing into his boxes, locked and nailed them down, and sent a very circumstantial account of what he had done, hoping that none would be so wicked as to deprive his relations of the property the boxes contained.

Her mother (who is still living, and making it her single care to be found at death in Christ Jesus) feared and loved

God from her youth, and endeavoured to train up her children in the way that they should go. When it pleased God to take away her companion in tribulation, she had many things trying to grapple with. When the ship that brought her husband's boxes returned to Whitby, instead of sending them to her immediately, they were not only opened, but his papers, and every thing that was valuable was taken out of them. This loss, from a quarter that was little suspected, was keenly felt by the family, and justly exposed the owners of the ship to reproach and shame. By the kindness of friends, and the little help she received from Chelsea hospital, she was able to go forward comfortably.

S. Kilham, the subject of this narrative, went to live with Mr. Ellart, a respectable school-master in the town. They were kind to her; and she endeavoured to return it by doing every thing in her power to serve them. She waited on them by night and by day, when they were passing through the valley of the shadow of death, and was with them when they bade adieu to the things which are seen. Mr. Ellart abundantly rewarded her services to them both, by leaving her the greatest part of his property after his decease.

My wife being blessed with parents that feared and loved God, was early acquainted with the theory of religion; and often found her mind deeply impressed with eternal things. Her convictions of the importance of a life devoted to God were very useful: and though she did not for a season close in heartily with the offers of mercy, yet they restrained her from a number of evils which many fall into.

It pleased God to bless the ministry of Mr. Robinson, clergyman of the church of England, to her, in a glorious manner. She was so deeply affected with the glorious truths which he delivered, as to give up herself reservedly to seek salvation, through the blood of the everlasting covenant. In the use of the means of grace, she found her hope encouraged, and did not seek long, before her sorrow was turned into joy. She had a clear manifestation of the love of Christ to sinners, and was enabled to rejoice in the application of suitable promises to her mind. She was brought from darkness to light, from the power of Satan to God. A consciousness of acceptance thro

through the beloved, and an inheritance with them that are sanctified, filled her soul with joy unspeakable, and full of glory.

Being naturally of a good gentle disposition, she was not easily ruffled with the things that disturb many. And having a lively confidence in the Lord, she was enabled to go on her way comfortably. She had to grapple with many temptations, but found the Lord to support in the trying hour. In the midst of difficulties, she cast her care upon the Lord, under a firm persuasion, that he cared for her.

She was united with a people that endeavoured steadily to promote the glory of God, and each other's salvation. By attending upon the means of grace, she found her soul to prosper in the divine life. By reading the scriptures and other books, she was enabled to see what was the will of God in Christ Jesus concerning her. In general, she walked in his fear, and in the comforts of the Holy Spirit.

At the conference, 1787, I was appointed to labour in the Scarborough circuit. We became particularly acquainted with each other in the month of December; and after obtaining liberty from Mr. Wesley, with the hearty consent of her mother and friends, we were married on Easter Monday, 1788. She continued to live in her house at Pickering, without being any expence to the connexion, till August, 1789. The Lord graciously helped us through our little difficulties, and caused us to rejoice in his salvation.

When she was called to pass through the perils of child-bearing, her mind was carried above fear, and she would cheerfully give up herself fully, to the great Disposer of all events. The Lord exceeded her hopes, and brought her speedily through her troubles, and blessed her with health and peace.

When we removed to Pocklington, we had a very small comfortable house. The situation she had left was a disgrace in comparison of it. Yet she found no difficulty in submitting to inconveniences and crosses, for the sake of the Lord Jesus. She took care of her child herself, and never thought of having a servant to wait on her there. Our circuit was extensive. We were not above five or six nights, six weeks at home, in the regular course of the circuit. — And the extra-days we spent with our families, were few

in comparison of many circuits, and without any allowance for them. But we had many sincere followers of the Lord Jesus to converse with, and experienced many mercies in our various engagements. In some places the work of the Lord revived. We beheld with pleasure, sinners converted from the error of their ways.

As I was not raised to the office of an assistant, though most of the circuit desired our stay, we were obliged to remove the next August, to Whitby.

We met with a kind and loving people in that circuit and found a great deal of satisfaction in the service of God. Many were the mercies bestowed upon us in that place. It pleased God to help my dear partner to pass a second time through the pains of child-bearing, without receiving any harm. Root and branch were spared for a season. She found her mind refreshed in the religion of Jesus, and filled up her place in the church and in the family, to the glory of God, and the honour of the connexion.

When the news reached us, that Mr. Wesley was dead, persons of different persuasions were agitated. Different opinions prevailed respecting the future government of our cause. As the leading men of the Whitby society were anxious to have all things as they had been from the beginning, they appeared exceedingly jealous lest any innovations should take place. Our assistant was exactly of the same disposition. A district meeting was held for assistants of several circuits. Other *preachers*, though in the connexion, were not invited to it. We heard nothing of what passed, but what the assistant pleased to communicate. As he, and several of the friends knew my sentiments, they wished to prevent me from going to the conference, but all their efforts were ineffectual.

My wife advised and counselled on the occasion. I saw the schemes of the leading men, and wished I could attend, to see what was transacted, if I could be of no service to the connexion.

Not being as yet in the office of assistant, we were obliged with our two children, after staying one year, to remove to Newcastle-upon-Tyne. If the voice of the people could have been heard, we should have had the privilege of making a second year. The Lord gave journeying mercies by land and by water. We were brought in safety and comfort among a number of sensible steady friends. We had

been many months in Newcastle, before the Lord called us to part with our dear little boy. My wife felt much on the occasion, but did not murmur at the dispensations of the Almighty. She freely offered the child to the Lord, and when he was called to Abraham's bosom, she could say, "Good is the will of the Lord."

When the contention took place about the sacrament, she never was backward to advise me to pursue what I thought to be right in the sight of God. And she never attempted to hinder me from standing up in defence of what I believed was for the welfare of his cause. It was her delight to help me in every thing. She took a pleasure in endeavouring to bear part of my cross.

After I had received a summons to attend the London conference in 1792, though she was within nine weeks of being delivered, she urged me to go, not fearing the face of any adversary. And when I was in London, before my trial commenced, she wrote to me as follows:

"I am truly thankful to God, for his particular providence manifested in thy behalf. I bless the Lord, I have no distress of mind about any thing. I hope I am, and shall be prepared, to follow the divine leadings of providence in all things. Should thou be brought through with honour to the cause, and peace and blessing to thy own mind, the praise shall be given to him, to whom praise is due. If not, we will take it as a part of the cup ordered by the Lord, and drink it accordingly. Let not thy mind be troubled in any-wise on my account. I find myself perfectly free and resigned. I hope the Lord will enable me at all times, instead of being a burden, joyfully to bear a part of thine. I pray for the prosperity of the truth, and that the Lord would more abundantly bless his own church and people every where."

When none of the preachers were willing to go to Aberdeen, I offered to supply that place, provided they would allow me to stay in Newcastle, till my wife should recover from child-bearing, and be able to bear the fatigues of the journey. To this the preachers readily consented. She cheerfully agreed to the appointment, and after having laid-in seven weeks, in the month of Oct. 1792, undertook a journey of 223 miles, to serve the cause of our glorious Immanuel. She was very sick in the journey, but bore it with pleasure, to promote the glory of God.

Every

Every thing appeared strange to us on our first going into Scotland. But the kindness of the people, and the privileges we enjoyed, more than compensated, for every difficulty we were called to encounter. My wife soon found her mind perfectly reconciled to the place, and thankful to God, for bringing us into such a peaceable situation. She endeavoured to shew her love to God and his cause, by filling up her place, in the church and her family, to his glory.

After we had spent about ten months in Aberdeen, it pleased God to call our second Samuel to himself. He died of the measles. This was a very trying scene to us both. We endeavoured to offer him to God, as we had done the child that died in Newcastle, and found power to give him freely, to the Giver of all our mercies. Before his death, we were enabled to say from our hearts, "Thy will be done." It is probable, however, that the fatigue she had during the child's affliction and death, with what she felt in her mind on account of his removal, laid the foundation of a nervous disorder, which in the end, called her to join her friends and children, to sing the anthems of the skies.

Soon after we had buried our little one, she wrote to me at Inverness, as follows:—"I received thine with a thankful heart, praising God for his mercy and loving-kindness, in preserving thee from danger, and for feeding thy soul with the bread of eternal life. His mercies are new every morning, they are repeated every moment. I have been much in the spirit of prayer since thou left home. Well may we say, there is no God, like our God. We know, if we be faithful, his presence will follow us through this wilderness, and bring us safe to the promised land. More holiness of heart, and devotedness to God is what we want. It is my grief and shame that I love the Lord so little, when he hath done such great things for me and mine. Oh! that this might be the last time I have to complain of myself."—In another letter she said,—"The Lord is good. He will with-hold nothing from us, that is for our happiness and his glory. I hope that God, for the sake of Jesus Christ, will more abundantly bless and water thy soul, and give a more abundant entrance into the mysteries of the gospel, that thou mayest be able to feed the sheep of Christ, with food convenient for them; and that he would make thee

thee more and more useful in bringing back those who are wandering in the paths of error, to his fold again. I find my happiness is so closely connected with thine, that I must always rejoice or mourn with thee.

"Surely the Lord delights to do his needy creatures good. I find myself deeply interested in every exercise thou hast to pass through. Before thou left home, I never found my heart more deeply engaged with God for a blessing on thy labours; and in thy absence I have been enabled to plead much with the Lord Jesus in thy behalf. I have found great brokenness of heart before him. My poor petitions have in a great measure been answered. I will not be discouraged to plead still with the Lord for a blessing on all thy sacred engagements. I have a good hope through grace, that the Lord will still stand by, and more abundantly bless and sanctify thee, for the great work thou hast undertaken, to thy present and eternal good, and the advantage of the people among whom thou art called to labour. Then doubt not, but be strong in the mighty God of Jacob. He can change the cold regions of the north, into a fruitful field, and the most desolate place, into springs of water. Oh! that I could love him with a perfect heart, fervently, and *never, never*, grieve him more. Believe me, what I have written here, is not studied, but the effusions of a heart filled with gratitude to the best of beings, for such unbounded goodness to his unworthy servant.

"There is nothing would reconcile me to part with thee in the way I do, but the great and glorious cause thou art engaged in: And I rejoice that I am accounted worthy to share a part of the cross with thee. I would say much more, but language fails to express what I feel in my breast at this solemn moment. God bless thee, and keep thee near himself for ever. AMEN."

She was often poorly at the latter end of the year 1793, and was frequently a good deal affected with her nervous complaint. She was considerably distressed, after she had had a miscarriage. For several weeks she felt the effects of not being sufficiently careful after it happened. We had the help of one of the best physicians in Aberdeen. He did every thing in his power to remove the complaint, and was instrumental in the hands of God, of doing her good. In the midst of weakness and pain, her soul was very comfortable.

fortable. She rejoiced much in the Lord Jehovah, and was enabled to look death in the face without terror.

In the course of the spring, 1794, she was variously exercised. Sometimes she appeared in tolerable health, and good spirits. But had many returns of her nervous complaint. She frequently thought that her affliction was unto death, and greatly wished to rest near her dear little boy, if the Lord should call her to himself. This led her to wish, that the conference would allow us to comply with the desire of Aberdeen friends, and stay a third year among them. She was very poorly in June, but urged me to go to the conference, as I had some affairs to settle in England, and was appointed the delegate for the different circuits in Scotland. Mr. Mather warmly opposed my staying a third year, in the meeting of the delegates. He complained it was a bad precedent, and might be attended with injury to the connexion, if such measures were countenanced. Yet this good man had come to Bristol from his third year of travelling in Hull circuit, and is now on his third year in Manchester. When I informed the delegates of the state of my wife's health, most of them heartily consented for me to go a third year to Aberdeen.

While I was in Bristol, my wife wrote to me as follows: "I rejoice and am thankful to the Lord for all his mercies. I pray that they may be sanctified to us both to all eternity. My health is much restored. My strength and spirits have greatly returned. I am almost a wonder to myself. The Lord hath not forsaken us in the darkest hour. If we live to him, he will set our feet upon the rock of ages, and bring us to enjoy peace and liberty for his name's sake.—I feel nothing but good-will to all mankind. I am enabled to pray daily for the happiness and salvation of all. I am a great debtor—the Lord has forgiven me much; ought I not therefore to forgive my fellow-creatures? Yes, I do freely from my heart, and pray that they may be restored. Stay the time of thy appointment in Bristol, and be happy. Come the best way that offers, not thinking of us, we will wait patiently the appointed time."

Her complaints frequently returned, and were generally attended with a great depression of spirit. A second miscarriage she was called to endure, soon after my return from the conference. She had been a good deal better before it happened, and was hoping that the Lord would graciously

graciously restore her to her wonted state of health. But in the midst of her trouble she thought death was at hand, and frequently mentioned her apprehensions on that head. Her mind was particularly happy. She rejoiced in hope of the glory of God. When it pleased the Lord to remove her complaints in a measure, and gave her health to go through the duties of the family, she was thankful, and took a singular pleasure in making us as comfortable as possible.

The Bristol dispute occasioned war through the connexion. She never checked me in the letters which I wrote on the occasion, but helped me to the utmost of her power.

We were particularly advised to remove to England at the conference in July, 1795, on account of her health.—

The Doctor thought that a change of air would be serviceable, and might be attended with great advantages. She left herself entirely in the hands of the Lord, determining to cast all her care upon him, knowing that he cared for her.

As I was appointed delegate for the North of Scotland, it was necessary to go earlier to Manchester, than I should have gone, had I been differently situated. We heard of the many threatenings Mr. Mather made use of, on account of the letter I had circulated, signed Martin Luther.—From other quarters we had many severe epistles. But none of these things moved us. We were enabled to look through all to God.

When I was on my way to the conference, my wife wrote as follows :—“ I hope the Lord will give strength and journeying mercies, and make thy way prosperous.—The Lord does hear our united prayers, and will suffer nothing to befall us but what is for our good, and his glory. When I am ready to be cast down on account of thy fa-
ligns and exercises, the promises of an unchangeable God revive my spirit, and make me ashamed of my weakness. I cannot, I dare not doubt his faithfulness. O Lord ! help me to be as clay in thy hands, and to leave my burden at thy feet !

“ I am this day witness, he is ever nigh to them that call upon him in truth. He might justly have been deaf to the prayers of such a poor, faithless, unworthy creature as I am; yet so tender and compassionate has the friend of sinners been, that he has not only supported, but abundantly

ly comforted in thy absence. I am enabled this day to cast my burden on the Lord, with all my cares and fears. My health and strength increases. For this blessing I desire to be thankful, and in the strength of the Lord to live to him. The name of Jesus is precious to my soul, and his love to me and mine is great indeed. We have been kept to this moment as in the hollow of his hand, from the ten thousand ills that croud around us by night and by day.

"After thou hadst left Aberdeen, many of the friends came to see us. They were very much affected. Sorrowing and weeping for the loss of their minister. They were to me like Job's friends; yet I found a secret pleasure in mingling my tears with their's. Very many of the people declare, they have received more real good to their souls in thy last year's ministry, than in both the former. May the Lord be as a wall of fire round about thee, and cause thy path to shine more and more to the perfect day: and increase thy usefulness in his church continually!

"It has been a trying circumstance to me to be so far separated the two last years on thy birth-day. I should have thought myself happy to have mingled my praises with thine. Yet I rejoice and praise the Lord for sparing thee till now. I see myself unworthy of this favour, and other blessings, which I cannot number. O may the Lord add to the days of thy life many happy years! May thy peace and usefulness be like a river, and thy righteousness like the waves of the sea! That at last, when thy head is silvered over with a good old age, thou mayest say with the great apostle, "I have fought a good fight, I have finished my course, I have kept the faith, henceforth there is laid up for me a crown of righteousness, &c."

The following extract is from a letter I received from him in Manchester.—"Ever since thou left us, I have had frequent gracious visits from the Holy Spirit, when I have been in secret, engaged with the Lord in thy behalf, that my soul has been lost in wonder, love, and praise. I have been ready to cry out, Lord, what am I, or what is my father's house, that thou shouldst thus bless me? Thou canst not tell how good the Lord has been to me, and is at this moment. My fears have been dispelled like the morning clouds.

"When I read thy letter, I plainly perceived, that the hearts of men, are in the hands of the Lord, to be turned whither

whithersoever he will. He can cause the wrath of man to praise him. Glory be to his great name for ever! For my own part I stand astonished at the goodness and loving kindness of God to us. He is better to us than our fears. His favour is better than life. If ever I gave myself and my all into his hands, it has been at this period.

"When I reflect on the ways of providence, I feel my soul humbled in the dust. I sincerely thank the friends for their kindness in remembering me at such a distance, and in appointing a situation that may be favourable to my health. My mind was perfectly reconciled to abide in any part in Scotland. But since providence has led the way, I am perfectly free to go. I cannot tell how it is, but I am sure my heart will be sorrowful at leaving this kingdom. I love the souls of the people. May such men be sent as will be a blessing to the circuit! I hope the Lord will give me, and the child strength to prosecute the journey. May the wisdom of the serpent, and the innocency of the dove, always be found in thee, and in all the standard-bearers of the Lord Jesus! May the blessing of Jacob's God be with thee, to protect and comfort thee in all thy undertakings! I endeavour to give thee up cheerfully to him who watches over us to do us good, and without whose knowledge a sparrow cannot fall. Accept of my thanks for thy kind remembrance of us. It was more than I could have desired after the labours of the sabbath. May the Lord of the vineyard repay thee a thousand-fold into thy own bosom! I long much to see thee, but not with impatience. I only wish I could bear a part of all thy toils. I see myself of little worth. No better than a cypher. A cumberer of the ground. Lord help me. Adieu."

By the advice of the doctor, she embraced an opportunity of coming to Shields by sea. The voyage was very serviceable. When we reached Alnwick, she was considerably better than she had been in Scotland. The situation was agreeable, and every thing appeared to be favourable, in regard to her health. For several weeks she had no returns of her nervous complaint, but was able to pursue her affairs with thankfulness. And when her affliction returned, it was not so violent as formerly.

After I had published the Progress of Liberty, and found an host of foes raised up against me, she exhorted me frequently to follow the convictions of my own mind, and the

openings of divine providence, not in the least fearing the consequences. She has often professed a willingness to live in the meanest situation, rather than I should be afraid of declaring my mind freely to the preachers. When the London Ball was received, that required my trial and expulsion, at the district meeting, she strengthened my hands in God. The abusive insulting letters we received from many quarters, together with the provoking language made use of by several in Alnwick circuit, only moved her to be more earnest at the throne of grace, and more resolved to be fully and for ever the Lord's. When the district meeting was ended, and we were continued in the circuit, it seemed her constant care, to get her mind prepared for all the events of providence. When her nervous complaints returned, she often found her mind very comfortable, and rejoiced in the God of her salvation. If her spirits were depressed, she always found relief in the religion of Jesus. She placed death frequently before her, and had divine impressions upon her mind, in meditations upon it.

On the last day of April she wrote to me as follows :—
 “ I am a little poorly. The woman in Bond-gate is dead. What need to be ready ! To have our lamps burning and oil in our vessels, that we may meet death as a welcome messenger ! My heart is fixed, trusting in the Lord, that he will be to us a father, and direct all our future steps. Thy happiness lies near my heart. My chief consolation when thou art absent is to bear thee on my heart before the Lord, that all thy wants may be abundantly supplied : that thou mayest be strong in the Lord and rejoice in the God of thy salvation. May the power of the highest overshadow thee by night and by day, and give thee once more to return to us in safety and peace !

When we were engaged in different exercises, she always found a number of promises bearing up her spirit above fear. She often stood amazed at the consolation which the Redeemer communicated by his word, and would lead to rejoice in those things which otherwise would have been too strong for her. She went round part of the circuit with me, and was greatly satisfied with the kindness of friends. They considered her as placed in a trying situation, and encouraged her to hope in the Lord for the support of his Spirit. Many of the friends rejoiced to see her supported above fear. And to hear her declare

confident

confidence in the Lord, respecting the trials which we were called to pass through. When I left Alnwick to go to the conference, she accompanied me to the extremity of the circuit, and had the misfortune to be thrown from the horse, which confined her in the house for several weeks. I was obliged to prosecute my journey towards London, while she was a prisoner, exposed to a number of reflections.

On my way to the conference, she wrote to me as follows:—"Under the protection of a good and gracious providence, I and my dear Sally got safe home last night. O that the Lord would enable me at all times to conduct myself in such a way and manner, that none may have cause to reproach religion on my account! I hope the Lord will enable me in some measure to bear up thy hands by faith and prayer. At present I find my mind willing to submit to the lowest station in life, if I may be of any service to thee, or in any measure help to smooth its rugged path. The Lord he is God, we will rejoice and be glad in him. May the God of peace bless thee, and make thy way plain!"

When I was in London, she wrote as follows:—"My spirits were a good deal revived and comforted, when I read of the friendly and kind treatment thou hast met with from different persons in thy journey. I hope the Lord will reward them double for every kindness they have rendered thee. I have no doubt that friends will be raised up as thy wants require, and thy mind kept above the fear of man. And should thou be forsaken of all, the Lord will be the strength of thy heart, and thy portion for ever.

"I am still a prisoner in the house. My foot continues lame. I find myself very weary with sitting so long, and my mind sometimes a little low. I hope the Lord will give me in patience to possess my soul, and wait the time when strength will be given. If I could bear more of my burthen for thee than I do, my heart would rejoice, even mine. None under heaven can be more willing to help, though many are more able. May the Lord bless, and send thee help from heaven!"

When she heard of my expulsion, and the triumph of a few individuals on account of the printed falsehoods circulated on the day I was expelled, she wrote to me as follows:

follows:—"Language fails to tell thee of the distressing time we have had to pass through. When the printed letter came, the shouts of victory were heard through the streets by our opposers. I had many friends uniting to comfort me: others, that before appeared friendly, were rejoicing at what they supposed to be our downfall. In the midst of these deep waters, the Lord has kept me from sinking. His blessed word has been my support and my stay. I will hope that these dark clouds will pass away, and the dawn of better days will appear.

"Do not, my dear, be unhappy about us. I am willing to go any where. As soon as we can find a suitable place, a little room or two, with peace, will make me happy. May the Lord be ever present with thee, and lead thee into the paths of truth and peace; and deliver thee out of the hands of thy formidable enemies, for they are many! I recommend thee to his gracious protection for he careth for thee."

On the 4th of August she wrote to a worthy friend as follows:—"I have the most grateful sense of your kindness, and the kindness of your family, as manifested heretofore to me and mine. I should think myself greatly wanting in my duty, were I not to return you my sincere thanks for your kindness, in inviting me and my dear child to your hospitable home. I have the deepest sense of your goodness to us in this most trying season. I have been surrounded with clouds and darkness for a season. But desire to praise the Lord for his goodness, in supporting me far beyond my expectation. Truly he has been better to me than my fears. My mind is a little relieved and I am hoping with humble submission to the divine will, to see better days. There is but one thing I am at present careful for, that is, the injury my dear husband is likely to sustain in his character, unless he will be able in a good measure to wipe off the various slanders our enemies have laid upon him. I hope I can be happy in any situation the providence of God may point out to us. The smile of heaven will bring peace into the meanest cottage."

As I had to stay in Nottingham to print my account of the trial, it prevented me from going to Sunderland till the latter end of August. She wrote several times before we met, and encouraged me not to fear. The Good Lord Jacob being on our side, we had a right to expect a

compliment

accomplishment of his promises; and she was fully persuaded,
 he would richly provide for us in every place. The con-
 ference turning me out, without giving us any help, did
 not affect her. She was conscious, the God of the spirits
 of all flesh, would amply supply our wants by Christ Jesus.
 When we met in Sunderland, she was very comfortable in
 her mind, and seemed to be quite satisfied with the dispen-
 sations of providence. She spent a few days with her mother
 and friends at Pickering, in our way to Leeds. She found
 her mind happy, in having another opportunity of meet-
 ing them again in the land of the living. When we were
 in Leeds, the Lord greatly blessed her in the hospitable
 family where our lot was cast. She found a thankful heart
 for the mercies conferred upon us in that place. It gave
 her great satisfaction to have an opportunity of conversing
 freely, with several persons who had a blessed experience of
 the things which made for their peace. When we removed
 to Salford, she found her heart exceedingly comforted in
 the blessings of the gospel, and in the kindness of a num-
 ber of friends. While she was there, she begun a letter to
 a friend whom she exceedingly respected, but was never
 able to finish it. In that letter she says, "I would not
 willingly give a moment's pain to an indifferent person,
 much less my friend. When I consider the paternal care of
 our heavenly father toward you, I am truly thankful. I
 think I see my dear friend hid as, under the hollow of his
 hand, screened from a thousand ills that swarm around.
 Yet trials of faith and patience await you, and all Zion's
 travellers. May you ever come out of the furnace as gold
 purified! He will be with you in it, and bring you through
 with shouts of victory. And when this transcient fluctua-
 ting scene of life is ended, you will be transplanted where no
 more blasts shall enter, and pain and sickness be for ever
 banished. O my dear friend! what have you or I to fear,
 if our interest be in the Master of the storm? Our little
 bark will glide safely through life's tempestuous sea, and,
 at last, anchor safe in the desired haven.

"When I begun this letter, I had no idea of closing it
 at this place. I think we are like birds of passage, our
 flight is so rapid, and pointing towards the mild regions of
 the south, before the keen north wind has its commission to
 strip the forests of their verdure, or the magazines of snow

and frost be issued forth, to make desolate the face of nature.

"After an absence of six years (in Pickering) I sought out many of my acquaintance. Some I found, and others were laid in the silent grave, cut off in the midst of their days; while I, an unfruitful branch, am spared in mercy. I hear a voice saying, "Give me thy heart:" be ready to meet thy friends in a better world above, where pain and parting shall be no more. O my dear friend, what keeps me back from a fuller enjoyment of God? The language of my heart is, Lord, I would be thine, in thine own way, only give me thy love, and enable me to give thee my whole heart. I see every thing around me as unstable as water. I know myself a stranger and pilgrim that hath no certain dwelling-place. I am travelling to the grave, as fast as time can carry me: and, after all, I am conscious my affections are not crucified, to the world, as they ought to be. I do not bring that glory to God that I might do. O that the Lord would pardon my sins and omission, for they are many! I wish to do all with a single eye to the glory of God, and conduct myself with great simplicity of heart before him. I am here in the midst of the methodistical war. Yet, I bless God, I am enabled to sit calm on tumult's wheel. Mr. M——r is raising his forces to prevent my husband's preaching, not only in their own chapels, but in the Dissenters. All he can avail little. The greatest want I feel is, to keep my mind humble and free from prejudice; more conformity to the divine will; more deadness to the world; and, a watchful and praying spirit. I feel poor in the midst of the richest offers of the gospel. May our mutual prayers reach the compassionate ear of the Lord Jesus, that he may destroy every unholy plant, and reign in our hearts without a rival. May the Lord bless you with health, that you may enjoy the blessings of his providence; but, if a delicate frame be your lot, the Lord will even bless this unto you. May you ever have to say, "Good is the will of the Lord."

She felt a good deal of pain in her head after we had been a few days in Manchester. This was a complaint she had never been troubled with in her former afflictions. One day I went to Chester, she was seized with a violent pain in the left side of her head, accompanied with sickness

her stomach. The last letter I received from her, was in Liverpool, dated 16th November, 1796. The following is an extract from it: "I have just received thy kind letter. Be assured it is a great trial that I cannot comply with thy kind request, and that of the friends. It has been, ever will be the pleasure of my life, in the smallest degree, to add to thy happiness. But the Lord has laid his afflicting hand upon me, therefore, I most gladly submit. I have not experienced such pain and sickness for many years. I bless God for this chastisement; he hath in judgment remembered mercy, and given a blessing to the means made use of. I am much relieved, but far from being fit for any place but my room. Don't be unhappy, but be very thankful. I want for nothing. Go on in the strength of the Lord, in the face of thine adversaries. Fear not. Do all the good thou canst while it is called to-day. Don't come home a day before the appointed time, on my account, unless quite convenient. Take all necessary care of thy health. It is a valuable blessing. May the Lord direct thy steps, by the light of his Spirit, and support thy mind in every emergency."

The following is an extract from a letter she had begun to me, but never could finish.—"It is one great privilege of the children of God, that they can hold a sweet communion together in spirit, when absent in body. It is a heart reviving thought, when I consider, the time is hastening in which we shall enjoy unbounded happiness, in being united in the closest spiritual union with our gracious Lord, and see each other's face to all eternity. My soul rejoices in hope of that day, when without any interruption we shall "range the fields of light, and climb the mount of joy." Oh! that thy soul may be filled with love, as thy life has been with labours! Then late, very late, may thou receive a full reward, and "enter into the joy of thy Lord." There, though lower far my place, I hope to meet, and as a lesser star, glorify our common Lord.

"To be happy, is a desirable state, and that every man may have if he pleases. He that is not content in any state, will be content in no state; for the fault is not in the thing, but in the mind. I wish to wear a thread-bare coat with as much satisfaction, as if it were fresh and made of the finest wool. I never heard of an imperial crown that cured the head-ach, or a golden slipper the gout. I wish never to be troubled for

for what I have not, but to rejoice for what I have. An inward peace of mind does more than compensate for the want of outward felicity.

“ If what I have written be acceptable to thee, my heart shall rejoice.”

When I returned from Liverpool, she was exceedingly distressed with pain and sickness. All the help we could procure from the skill of the physician, and the power of medicine, could not afford her relief. I often left her for a few days to preach in different places. But when I returned from Sheffield, on the 17th of January, 1797, she desired I would not leave her again, unless it were for a few hours.

While we were in Salford, Mr. and Mrs. Heamer did every thing in their power to help. They rejoiced to administer any thing they could impart, to be of service to her. They were exceedingly desirous that she might recover, and used all their influence to remove her complaints, or to lessen her troubles. But all their efforts, united to those of the physician, were ineffectual.

We removed to Red-Hall on the 18th, where every kindness was shewn that our friends there could administer; and on the 22d, to Ashton. We were kindly entertained at the house of a friend, for two nights, but when we could proceed no farther towards Leeds, we removed to Mr. Wm. Heginbottom's, where we continued till she was no more.

Fresh means were used by a very respectable apothecary, but though he varied his application, and did every thing in his power to remove her complaints, yet the disorder was too deeply rooted, to be removed by human power. The violent pain continued in her head till the last. And her stomach was so very much disordered, that it would digest nothing. The last five weeks of her life, she appeared to live almost by miracle. Every person that saw her was amazed how she could continue, when she received no kind of food. A few days before her death, she was seized with a fever, which affected her mind. She was a little deranged. But her conversation was only childish. She never expressed any thing in that period, that was in the least offensive. The three last days of her life, she had a fore conflict with pain and death. She appeared sensible, but could not speak. About half an hour before she died, she did not breathe so hard, but gradually declined, till she gently glided

glided out of life, without a sigh, about half past eight o'clock in the morning, on the 23d of February, in the 41st year of her age.

Before she was seized with this affliction, she found her soul exceedingly happy. She wondered at the kindness and mercy of God vouchsafed in Christ Jesus. She spoke to me of the great joy she felt in her mind, and was led to suppose, some severe trial was at hand. Her mind was greatly blessed in the Redeemer through the whole of her affliction. She soon was persuaded that her departure was at hand, and spoke to me of her little affairs, that she might have nothing to do but to meet the Lord Jesus, whenever her soul should be required. She bore up beneath her extreme pain with great patience, and never murmured at the dispensations of providence to her. She often encouraged me to trust in the Lord, and fear the face of no evil. To sacrifice every thing rather than stain my conscience with guilt. Whatever trials I might meet with, she was assured the Lord would help me to bear them to his glory, and my own advantage. She exhorted me to continue my efforts to promote the welfare of the connexion, by seeking a redress of the grievances which have crept among us, let the consequences be what they might. Whenever there was any appearance of her troubles being removed, she still thought they would continue, till she had done with the things that are seen.

She often was greatly afraid, lest she should give way to murmuring or repining in her trouble. She frequently intreated the Lord to proportion her strength according to her days. She begged for us to plead with God, that she might possess her soul in patience continually. She frequently asked me what she should do, and begged I would repeat some promises from the scriptures, suitable to her state, as her memory was much impaired. It appeared her mind was a good deal refreshed by them. She was led to hope that the Lord would never leave or forsake her.—About three weeks before her departure, she thought death was at hand, and longed to be dissolved, to be with Christ. When she could hardly speak, she said, how fain would I have

“Clap'd my glad wings, and for'd away,
And mingled with the blaze of day.”

She

She thought she was just entering into the joy of her Lord, when the young woman that sat up with her, took her by the hand, and as she imagined, prevented her.— She spoke a good deal on spiritual things to several that were with her, and afterwards told me how happy her soul was, while she was speaking to them.

When the disorder deprived her of her reason, she was quite childish. Her mind was much taken up with thoughts of being with her mother and friends. She wanted a number of things, as persons generally do that are in such a state. Yet, even then, she was glad when we prayed with her, and, and never said any thing contrary to the religion of Jesus. I spoke a good deal to her on the Sunday morning before she died. Her mind was comfortable, and she was still desirous of being released from the miseries of life. The pain continued very intense till the Thursday morning, when she was gloriously released from all her sufferings. She appeared sensible when she could not speak, and knew when we prayed with her: she continued looking upward as though all her soul was engaged above, till she breathed her last. She lived and died in the faith of our Lord Jesus Christ.

The evening after her death, I preached, with many tears, to a number of attentive hearers, according to a former appointment. On Saturday evening I spoke again, not far from Ashton. On Sunday morning, from the passage at the head of the first sermon annexed to this account. About twelve o'clock a vast number of friends met together, from Manchester, Rochdale, Middleton, Oldham, Redhall, Mosley, and all the places near, to attend the funeral. About one o'clock, upwards of 1000 persons joined in singing her remains to the church. As soon as the ceremony was ended, we went to the chapel. But there was such a crowd of people, that we could not get into it for a season. I first attempted to stand on a bench near the door, that the people might hear in the yard and in the house; but I was obliged to go into the pulpit at last, and the house was wedged with hearers, as I never saw a place before. Many however could not hear. They were obliged to go away. Both in the morning and at that hour, we mingled our tears and our worship before God. The prayers of the people, and their

blessing

bleſſing attended us all the day. That evening I preached in Moſley to a large congregation. We felt the ſoftening power of divine grace, and mutually rejoiced in the God of our ſalvation. Upwards of a hundred friends from Aſhton accompanied us thither, and returned to their families, ſinging the praises of God, as they journeyed by the way.

It was the ſolemneſt day of my life. My tears were my meat, in the ſenſe David wiſhed that paſſage to be underſtood. The mercy of God, the kindneſs of friends, the loſs of my dear partner, my own unworthineſs, and a thouſand other things, melted me into tenderneſs before all. Yet the Lord helped me to ſpeak three times to the people. To his name be glory and praiſe for ever.

Our ſituation was providential. Every kindneſs that mortals could ſhow, had been manifeſted to us in Salford, by Mr. and Mrs. Heamer, and a few of the friends.— We had all the help that a reſpectable phyſician and apothecary could adminiſter. The latter exerted himſelf beyond meaſure to be of ſervice. When no relief could be obtained there, it ſeemed neceſſary to try a more open air. No place under heaven could have been found more agreeable than Aſhton. Mr. W. Heginbottom and his dear partner, opened their door to receive us, whether the afflicted ſhould live or die. And the ſix weeks we were with them, they took a ſingular pleaſure in waiting on us by night and by day. When the friends would not allow me to attend her by night as well as by day, any longer, for fear of injuring my own health (as I preached ſeven or eight times a week, beſides walking ſeveral miles) upwards of forty women offered to ſit up with her. The laſt three weeks ſhe lived, two of the friends came generally every night, and were unwearied in attending upon her. They ſeemed anxious to be of ſervice to us, in our diſtreſs. And when it pleaſed God to releaſe her, it is impoſſible to deſcribe the willingneſs of the friends to help in every reſpect.

I take this opportunity of returning them my ſincere thanks. Their kindneſs is engraven on my heart in indeliſible characters. It can never be eraſed. May the living God reward them and the Manchester, &c. friends a thouſand fold in their own boſom, for the good they conferred on me! May he bleſs them in their body and ſoul; in their family

family and children; in their basket and store; in their going out and coming in; in their business, and in their religious connexions; in the church, and in the world; in time, and through the ages of eternity! And, may he permit us all, at last, to meet around his throne, where we shall have to adore the triune Jehovah, world without end.

I shall finish this short account with two observations. First, Several of the preachers imagined that my dear wife was not formerly so poorly as she often appeared to be. I have already observed, Mr. Mather opposed my staying three years in Aberdeen, though he had been three years in Hull himself, but could not accomplish his desire. In the last conference, he jeeringly observed, when they were attempting to justify long removes, "If my wife had got so much good as I professed in Alnwick, this was sufficient to show, that in some cases, long removes were necessary." I readily acknowledged it; but still maintained, that a vast number of the removes were unnecessary. It pleased God to suffer my dear wife to sicken and die in Mr. Mather's presence, (as it were) to convince him, and all that are of the same feelings, that neither of us were hypocrites, or complaining formerly of her trouble.

Secondly, Some have been so cruel as to assert, that her affliction and death were occasioned by the measures I have pursued, in opposing the preachers. But nothing can be more false than this assertion. I can appeal to the friends of Alnwick circuit, and in every place where we have been since the conference, whether she ever gave a single hint of being dissatisfied with my conduct, or the consequences of it? The friends in Leeds and in Manchester can bear testimony, that an insinuation of this nature, is extremely unchristian. Her letters to me prove the contrary, to demonstration.

But had she died of a broken heart, (which is utterly contrary to truth) was it my conduct, or the conduct or cruelty of the conference that led to this? Setting aside the persecution I met with before the conference, my expulsion and being published through the nation as the vilest of men, the manner of my being expelled might have affected a heart less susceptible of feeling than her's. After I served the connexion twelve years, and the preachers never attempted to charge me with any thing immoral, yet they turned me out, without allowing me a single farthing

help myself with. They only gave me back what I had subscribed to the preachers' fund, without any interest. My wife had not received a farthing for quarterage for eight years, though many preachers' wives, who have two or three times her income, receive their quarterage regularly, as though they had not a shilling in the world. By not taking her quarterage, she saved the connexion ninety-six pounds, besides what she saved in frugality and good management. And yet they turned her out of house and harbour, without allowing her one shilling, either to remove from Alnwick, or begin house-keeping with in any place. The first quarter after we went to Manchester, Mr. Rotherford wanted to make it an article in a leader's meeting, that no person should have a ticket who circulated or read my books, heard me preach, or gave me any support. They have even grudged the kindness of friends, declaring in letters, and in conversation, that I had received so many pounds at such or such a place, when in reality I had not received a halfpenny, or nothing in comparison of what they asserted. The friends know my situation, and have kindly helped me. Their conduct toward me has in part compensated for the cruelty of the conference, in turning me out without a halfpenny. The preachers have also published what a vast of money I shall get by the Monitor, and endeavoured to insinuate that this is the object I have in view in all my proceedings. Now I appeal to every candid reader, if these things together were not enough to break a heart of stone? But so far from their having this effect on my dear wife, she bore them as part of her cross, and cheerfully submitted to the will of God.

I shall just add in concluding, if I were to get several hundred pounds by printing and the help of friends, surely the leading men of the conference would not unchristian me for that, when they have done every thing in their power to make me poor enough? But I here offer to any person who will advance me fifty pounds, to turn over to him the Monitor, and he shall have all the accounts regularly from the printer, and I promise to provide materials as good as I can, to make up the number eighteen, according to what I have proposed. And I also offer, if called upon at the next conference, to shew what I have received from the friends in different places, and what I have disbursed. And if I have received more than I shall then have expended, I offer to

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dispose of that money, as a committee of the friends shall appoint.

I most sincerely pray that God would mercifully look from heaven on the whole connexion, and save it from every thing that threatens its ruin! May he bring about such a change among us, that every thing may be fixed on a solid and firm foundation; that no designing men may have power to lord it over the consciences of their brethren! May he cause unity, peace, and concord, to return on gospel terms, that the connexion may be one for ever! And may he graciously forgive those who have injured me in any respect, that they may have nothing to answer for on account of what they have done to me or mine! And may he bring us all into such a glorious state of gospel liberty, that we may fill up our place in the church and the world, according to the direction of his word, and be happy together, world without end! AMEN.

A. KILHAM

EPWORTH, 1st April, 1797.

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A
S E R M O N

PREACHED AT

A S H T O N,

ON THE

Morning of the 26th February, 1797,

FROM

2 Samuel, xii. 21, 22, 23.

Then said his Servants unto him, What Thing this that thou hast done?
Thou didst fast and weep for the Child while it was alive: but when
the Child was dead, thou didst rise and eat Bread. And he said
While the Child was yet alive, I fasted and wept; for I said, Wh'
can tell whether God will be gracious to me, that the Child may live?
But now he is dead, wherefore should I fast? Can I bring him back
again? I shall go to him, but he shall not return to me.

ADVERTISEMENT.

WHEN I preached the following Discourses I had not the least Thought of publishing them. But as it is the Desire of several respectable Friends, that heard them, to see them in Print, for the general Good, I have cheerfully complied with their Request, hoping the God of Heaven will attend them with his Blessing, to all that shall read them.

The leading Ideas are retained. But as I never could preach twice exactly in the same Words, from one text, there is of consequence a little Variation of Expression. It was more than a Month after they were preached, before I wrote them. The candid Reader will make every necessary Allowance for any Thing he may find in them, which he thinks might be mended. As I always judge for myself when I read any Man's Works, whatever may be his Name or Abilities, so I wish every Person to use his own Judgment, that reads any Thing which I have written, and to follow no farther than I follow Christ and Apostles.

A. KILHAM

A Sermon, &c.

2 SAMUEL, xii. 21; 22, 23.

WE are informed that David grievously sinned against the Lord : in an unguarded hour, suitable temptation was presented to him. His heart led him to yield to the adversary. He gave place to the devil, and sinned against the Lord his God. One sin generally leads to another. He added murder to adultery, with a design to cover his offence, and by this means rendered himself exceedingly criminal before all. It appears, that for a season, his heart was not sufficiently affected with his guilt. He seems to have gone forward in his crimes without humbling himself before the Lord.

At length Nathan the prophet was sent unto him. By a suitable parable he led David to pass sentence against the man that was supposed to have taken his neighbour's lamb, and spared his own flock ; and by this measure he condemned himself. The prophet applied the subject to his conscience. It was fastened as a nail in a sure place. Conviction immediately seized his heart. He felt remorse in his soul on account of the evils he had given place to, and owned his guilt before the prophet of the living Jehovah. No sooner was he sufficiently affected with what he had done, than Nathan said unto him, " The Lord hath put away thy sin : thou shalt not die." But at the same time he informed the king of Israel, that the child he appeared particularly attached to, should surely die. Though the Lord did not require that David should fall a victim to the law, which required that murder should be avenged in the

death of him that occasioned it, yet he came near to this great prince, by determining to remove from his arms, the child that was exceedingly dear to him.

It appears that David supposed the threatening was conditional, and that the Lord would not go to the utmost extent of the judgment denounced. We can hardly suppose, that he would have pursued the measures he did pursue, had he been fully persuaded, that the threatening was absolute. When the hand of the Lord was stretched out in the affliction of the child, he was greatly affected. He humbled himself at the foot-stool of the Lord, and refused to be comforted. He lay all night upon the ground, and would by no means allow himself the support which was necessary to preserve life. The whole family appeared affected with his distress. They saw the anguish of his heart, and were concerned for his preservation.

At length it pleased God to release the child from all its miseries. His affliction ended in death. It appears that David's servants supposed he would follow the conduct of those, who are more affected when their children or friends die, than they are in the time of their affliction. They were afraid of informing him that the child was dead; but he soon perceived, by their whispering together, that some change had taken place, and therefore asked them, if the child was dead. When he was assured that this was the case, he immediately altered his conduct: "He arose from the earth, and washed and anointed himself—changed his apparel—went into the house of the Lord and worshipped: then he went to his own house, and when he required, they set bread before him, and he did eat."

He first prepared to worship in the house of God, and then to behave in his family as he had formerly done. He was conscious it was his duty to acquiesce in the will of God; and, that instead of murmuring, he ought to worship and adore. At the same time he was convinced that he ought to receive suitable food for the support of his own life, and to act in the presence of his family, as he had done, before the child was afflicted.

It appears, however, that David's conduct was not according to the maxims of this world, even in that age. His servants expected that he would have been more distressed when his child died, than he had been in his affliction. They supposed he would be inconsolable. Perhaps

they imagined, he would act more like a man deranged in the trying hour, than a person influenced by cool reason.— They had no idea that religion would teach him to glorify God in the midst of his troubles, and lead him to act in them as a true follower of the Lord his God. In the midst of their astonishment they said unto him, “What thing is this that thou hast done? &c.” What is the reason thou hast not followed the maxims that are established among men? What has prevented thee from giving place to the grief that thousands experience on such trying occasions? We are utterly at a loss to understand the motives from whence this conduct arises, and what thou feelest different from other men, to lead thee to behave so contrary to them?

“And he said unto them, While the child was yet alive, I fasted and wept; for I said, Who can tell whether God will be gracious to me, that the child may live? But now he is dead, wherefore should I fast? Can I bring him back again? I shall go to him; but he shall not return to me.” While the child was yet alive, there was a degree of hope in David’s heart, that he might live. He could not prevail upon himself to believe, that the threatening was absolute. He was led to suppose, the Lord would be gracious to him, in removing his affliction, and restoring him to health again; but when he was assured that the child was dead, he was fully convinced he ought to seek his life no longer. He argued wisely with his servants upon the subject. Do you suppose, that my fasting and prayers will raise the child from the dead? Is it possible for me to use any efforts to bring him back again? I know assuredly, that I shall go to him; but he shall not return to me. In a few months, or years, I shall have done with the things of this life, and then I shall meet my child in the world of spirits, to join him in singing the anthems of the skies. He will never return to this wilderness, to endure the troubles that are incident to mortality. He has entered into a better state, and met with a more delightful situation.

Having made these remarks upon the subject, as it refers to David, let us now endeavour to improve it to our own advantage. There are two things this text will lead us to consider. First, How we ought to behave when our relations and friends are afflicted. Secondly, How we ought to behave when the Lord removes them from us. The subject

ject is important. It demands our serious attention: we are deeply interested in it. If we beseech the God of our mercies, to help at this time, he may condescend to meet with, and bless us in his worship. May his presence be with us, that our meeting together may be for his glory!

I. We are to enquire, How we ought to behave when our relations and friends are afflicted.

1. When the Lord, in his great mercy, gives us relations and friends that are kind and obliging, we feel our hearts closely united to them. We sincerely love those that are bone of our bone, and flesh of our flesh. Their wants become ours. We are ready, on all occasions, to show our regard for them. We seek their comfort and welfare continually. We cheerfully administer to their necessities, and take a singular pleasure in adding to their happiness. If our love to them, arise from the love of God, shed abroad in our hearts, by the Holy Ghost given to us, it will lead us to be kind and affectionate to all that we have to do with in the world. It will lead us more especially to be careful in all things, that we may be of service to those who are near to us by the ties of nature.

2. It is our duty to feel much for our relations, when they are brought into any kind of trouble or sorrow. If the afflicting hand of God be upon them, we should consider their frame, and remember that they are but dust. We cannot imagine what many endure under the influence of acute pain. Wearisome nights, and troublesome days are appointed for them. In the evening, they frequently wish for the light of the morning: and, in the morning, they earnestly desire the shades of the evening, that balm sleep may give them some relief. When we seriously reflect on their state, it is impossible to be unconcerned. If our little ones are afflicted, and cannot inform us of their troubles, it adds to our tenderness, while we read in their sighs and tears, as well as in their expressive looks, what they endure. And if our friends, advanced to years of knowledge in life, are so tortured with pain, and so reduced by affliction, that they cannot relate to us their miseries, we are amazingly concerned on their behalf. Ought we not to pity them in their trouble, and share, if possible, in their sorrows? Were we to be unaffected, would it not be to our reproach? and, were we unkind, would it not be sinful in the sight of God? Ought we not, in such cases, to be kind

ly affectioned to our friends, that their hearts may be comforted, in the midst of their trouble ?

3. It is our duty to do every thing, in our power, to assist them in their afflictions. We ought to attend upon them, by night and by day, that we may be ready to help in their trouble. If it be in our power, whatever may be of service, either to alleviate their pain, or to remove their complaints, we ought to administer it with cheerfulness. If a man refuse to help the distressed in his house, to save expence, and prefer laying up treasure on earth, to the health of his family, it is hardly possible to find words to describe his wretched character. The afflicted have need of many things to comfort them in their sorrows. But should we refuse to part with our substance, to administer to their necessities, this of itself would be *a denial of the christian faith, and prove us to be worse than Infidels*. On the other hand, when a man prefers the welfare of his family to every thing this world affords, and cheerfully parts with any thing that is necessary to help them in distress, he acts the part which the gospel requires, and makes religion respectable to those who are around him.

4. It is our duty to seek help from others, if our own efforts fail. Though we are conscious, were it the will of our Maker, he could restore the afflicted to health, without the use of means, yet this should not prevent us from seeking help from those that are useful to thousands. Many of them are secretly led, by an indulgent providence, earnestly to desire to remove the miseries of their fellow-creatures. They study, night and day, how to help the wretched in distress. From the wisdom they acquire, by reading and observation, they are sufficiently qualified to assist in a number of cases. Should we refuse to employ them, for fear of the expence, or from an opinion that our own prescriptions may answer better than their's, we may foolishly add to the miseries of the afflicted, and hasten their death. On the other hand, if we provide all the help which the skill of the physician, or the power of medicine can afford, should they afterwards languish and die, we shall have satisfaction in reflecting, that we have spared no expence to help them in their affliction. This reflection alone, will give us a thousand times more pleasure, than all the riches in the universe would afford, had we neglected our duty to those that had a right to demand our help.

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5. The religion of Jesus does not forbid our earnestly desiring the health of the afflicted. We may sincerely wish that all their miseries were removed, and that we might live with them in health for years to come. If these desires are regulated by the scriptures, we shall have the answer of a good conscience in them. But should our desires exceed the bounds of moderation, and degenerate into anxious solicitude, without any submission to the will of God, this will contract guilt on our spirit, and expose us to condemnation. If our anxiety should lead us to murmur and repine at the dispensations of providence, we shall dishonour our Maker, and reproach our religious profession. But if our desires are sanctified by the word and spirit of God, they will be attended with good to ourselves, and at the same time be an ornament to our character.

6. When human help fails, we ought to seek help from God. In a thousand instances he has answered prayer in the recovery of those, who were given up by the physician. His hand has been stretched out to rebuke their complaints; and he has renewed their strength to the astonishment of all that were around them. The fervent effectual prayer of the righteous availeth much. When we have used every mean that can be devised by man, and find no change takes place, we ought to have recourse to God in prayer. Means that are suitable can be of no service unless he give them success. The issues of life and death are in his hands. When we do every thing in our power to be of service to the afflicted, and commit our cause to God in fervent prayer, intreating him to look from heaven in tender mercy upon us, he may be gracious, and cause his glory in the face of Jesus to appear in our behalf.

In order to help our prayers, and to add to their fervour, we ought to examine what is the cause of the afflictions of our friends? Many things may appear to satisfy our minds in this inquiry. But if we examine our hearts attentively, it is probable, we shall find, that in some measure, we are the cause of their trouble. We have given them, it is probable, too great a share in our affections. We have suffered them to be the idols of our heart. We have not acted toward them as the Lord our God requires. We have encouraged those principles in our children which ought to have been nipped in the bud. Perhaps we have refused to restrain them in many things contrary to God. We have

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not behaved towards them as we ought to have done. If we have reason to bless God that none of these things are chargeable on our conscience, the Lord may suffer afflictions to come, to be of service to the afflicted, and to all that are connected with the family. It may be for the trial of our faith, and of all our graces. Whom the Lord loves he chastens, and scourges every son that he receives. He often chooses his people in the furnace, that they may be made partakers of his holiness. And when he sanctifies every stroke of his rod to our advantage, it is our duty cheerfully to submit.

7. That our prayers may be effectual, we should humble ourselves particularly before God. Though David was positively informed that his child should die, yet he sought the Lord in extraordinary means, hoping that he would be gracious, and spare his son. We ought to humble ourselves exceedingly before God, acknowledging our sins at his foot-stool, and seeking mercy in Christ Jesus. We should not forget, that while they suffer in the midst of trouble, we are spared as monuments of divine mercy. If the Lord had dealt with us according to our sin, or rewarded us according to our iniquity, we should have been plunged into the greatest depths of distress and misery. If our humiliation has a proper effect on our own mind, it will lead us to be exceedingly importunate at the throne of grace. Our petitions should be directed to God for mercy and salvation, both for ourselves and the afflicted. If we intreat the Lord to remove the guilt of past offences, and to give peace to the consciences that are troubled, we have many encouraging promises to build our hope upon, in the word of God. And should we earnestly seek from his indulgent hand, to obtain a new heart, and a right spirit, we have reason to believe, he will not withhold them from us. When we ask of God for mercies which he has promised to impart, we ought to believe in hope against hope, till they are revealed to our minds. But when we plead for any favours which are not promised in the scriptures, we should do it with submission to the divine will. Perhaps the Lord sees it abundantly best for our dear relations to have done with the things that are seen, that they may enter into the joy he has prepared for them. He may determine to take them sooner than us, to their great reward. If he remove them from the evil to come, our temporary loss will

will be their eternal gain. Should we weigh these reflections seriously in our own minds, we shall moderate our desires for their recovery. After we have intreated the Lord to remove the bitter cup far from them, we shall qualify our prayers by adding, "Not my will, but thy will be done." When we thus ask the life of a child, of a beloved partner, or any friend, he will consider our request, and deal with us as infinite wisdom shall direct.

8. Lastly, David used extraordinary means to accomplish his end. He separated himself from the family. He refused necessary food. He lay all night on the ground. He was in an agony till he learned the will of God concerning him. Should we imitate his example, it may be attended with many advantages. If we add fasting to prayer, and retiring from company, spend whole nights in solemn humiliation and addresses to the throne of grace, we may soon perceive the good effects of this upon our own minds, and on the souls of the afflicted. If the Lord were to refuse answering the petitions we present before him for the life of our friends, while he quickens our souls, and comforts the hearts of the afflicted, we shall have abundant cause to be thankful. It is hardly possible to be sincere in solemn extraordinary humiliation before God, without receiving spiritual good: And in many cases, the Lord answers these prayers that are offered before him, in regard to other things. We may rest assured, that such exertions, sanctified by the grace of God, will be of service to us in our way to eternal life.

II. Let us now consider how we ought to behave, when the Lord removes our relations from us.

1. We ought to acquiesce in the divine will. When he suffers death to snatch them from us, we ought by no means to oppose his will. Were we to murmur and repine at his providence, and complain of the loss we have sustained with unchristian reflections, we should dishonour the Lord and God, reproach our religious profession, and sin against our own soul. If the Lord has taken them from the evil to come, and we are conscious that they are admitted into a more glorious situation, why should we murmur or repine? Have we not asked with submission to the divine will, that their life might be spared, reserving our case fully to God, and would it not be sinful now to think that he has dealt harshly with us? It is impossible but to feel much on parting with

our dearest friends. The God of nature does not forbid our mourning on that account. He admits of our acting according to his blessed word in such cases: To sorrow with hope. Jesus Christ wept when he was at the tomb where Lazarus was interred. It often happens, that those who act out of character at the death of their friends, and seem determined never to be comforted again, soon forget them, and turn their attention to other things; but those who feel and sorrow as Christians, hold the memory of their friends dear to them, after many days. It is the glory of Christians to submit cheerfully to the will of God, in things that are severely trying to flesh and blood. The wicked, or self-righteous, may call this a want of affection for our friends; but it arises from the love of God revealed in our souls by Christ Jesus. It is a principle planted in the heart by the Spirit of God, and leads those that profess it to cry out, on all occasions, "Good is the will of the Lord."

2. We should lay aside every thing that is contrary to submission to the will of God. David arose, washed himself, and put on a change of raiment. He appeared in his family as he had formerly done. If a person were to profess resignation to the divine will, and act contrary to it in his life and conversation, his profession would be vain. But when the signs of grief are laid aside, and the man of God appears satisfied with the dispensations of providence, he has an outward conduct that ornaments the gospel of God our Saviour. If, like David, we have retired from the world, and even from our family, while our dearest friends have been suffering; if, like him, we have refused our necessary food, and spent whole nights in prayer, on their account, we ought, at their decease, to act a different part. Were we not to act a different part, it would be a testimony against us. It would evidence, that we have not that submission to the will of God, that becomes persons in our situation. There was a time when David himself acted out of character in this respect. When he found, that his beloved Absalom, (who had lifted up his heel against him, and was pursuing him with an host,) was dead, he gave place to his passions, and acted a very unchristian part. He went about crying, "Oh, Absalom, my son! My son, Absalom! Would to God I had died in thy place!" He would not appear before the people till he was constrained. And his conduct on the occasion, when he presented himself before them,

them, sufficiently evidenced, that he did not submit cheerfully to the will of God. His behaviour, on that occasion, discovered a want of that piety which possessed his heart, at the time our text alludes to. If we follow his example, at the death of Absalom, we shall reproach our profession, dishonour the living God, and bring guilt upon our own consciences. But if we follow his example, as it is recorded in this passage, we shall testify to all, that we acquiesce in the will of God, and at the same time, both ornament our christian profession, and have the answer of a good conscience.

3. We ought to appear before God in the congregations of his people, to worship at his footstool. No sooner had David heard of the death of his child, than he prepared for the house of God, and hastened to adore his great benefactor, for all his mercies. I apprehend, he praised God for the deliverance he had given to his child from all his miseries in this life. At the same time, he would plead with the Almighty for new mercies, and endeavour to bind himself by new obligations, to be fully on the Lord's side for ever.—What a different conduct many manifest on such occasions! The house of God is forsaken by them for many weeks. They never appear with his people to worship at his footstool, till several months are elapsed. Though they have reason to believe, that their relations are taken from the evil to come, yet they give place to such excessive grief, that they cannot bear the thought of worshipping publicly with the people God. If we desire to glorify his name, who bought us with his blood, we ought to follow the example placed before us in this passage. Let us worship in the house of God, with those that love the Lord Jesus in sincerity. We ought to praise his adorable name, for standing by our dear relations in the midst of the shadow of death. We should bless him from our heart, for preparing them for himself, and graciously discharging them from the painful war. We ought to bind ourselves in new bonds, to be elevated in body and spirit to his service. We should entreat him to help us by his Spirit, to walk as the redeemed of the Lord, that when it is our lot to leave the world, we also may be found in Christ, without spot and blameless.

4. We ought to appear in our own house, as the followers of our divine Master. David appeared in his family as usual. He commanded his servants, and they set bread before him

and he did eat. His conduct, in this respect, would banish the gloom that had been manifest in the house, while he was exercised in fasting and prayer. Many that call themselves christians, on the death of their friends, not only refuse to worship in the house of God, but determine to refuse their necessary food. They withdraw from the family, and spend a great deal of time alone, brooding over their own thoughts, till they are melancholy. They get such an antipathy to company, that they will hardly be seen by a friend. An horrible gloom hangs upon their countenance, and the whole family is unhappy on their account. Such a conduct discovers a very great want of that piety which the gospel offers to true believers. It appears, that such persons imagine, they do well to be angry. If they could only view themselves as they are in the sight of God, and as all sensible pious christians view them, they would be ashamed of their conduct, and determine to act a more honourable part. If we would follow the example of David in this matter, our families would be comforted; our relations would rejoice; our christian brethren would admire the grace of God communicated to us; we should see that we have not believed in vain; we should be happy in our own minds; and the living God would be glorified by our conduct before him in his church.

5. Our relations and neighbours, who are unacquainted with the religion of Jesus, may cry out, "What thing is this that ye have done? While your friends were afflicted you fasted and prayed, and were exceedingly distressed; but now they are dead, you have left off to weep and mourn!" It frequently happens, that many of our acquaintances neglect every duty they owe to their friends, in the time of affliction as it refers to the salvation of their soul. They keep hoping they will recover. For want of laying to heart their state, and seeking blessing in Christ Jesus upon them, they flatter them with hopes of recovery, and do every thing in their power to prevent them from thinking of death. They never calmly reflect what their feelings will be, should they be removed. The delusive hope of recovery often prevails in the afflicted and their friends, till within a few moments of their departure out of this wilderness. When this is the case, those that survive, having no interest in Christ, nor consolation from the Holy Spirit, are immediately deluged in sorrow. They appear amazed that

death has done his office so suddenly, and to them unexpectedly. They weep and mourn in extreme sorrow and distress. A thousand things press on their spirits to make them unhappy. Perhaps the greatest of these are serious reflections on their own state, and on the unsuitableness of their friends to meet death. If they have been instrumental in flattering their dying relations, and been a means of hindering them in their preparation for death, these reflections fill their hearts with sorrow. We need not be astonished for a moment, that persons of this description should be abundantly more grieved and unhappy, when their friends are dead than they were while they were living. And as so very few either professors of religion, or sinners act differently, when any are following the example mentioned in the text, it is natural for their neighbours to ask, "What thing is this that thou hast done?"

The christian can answer, I have not followed the maxims of this world. I refused to flatter the afflicted, or impose on myself. I laid to heart the afflictions and miseries of the persons I loved, and bore them on my soul before God, in my fervent addresses to his throne. I spoke freely to them of their state, and warned them of the danger. I endeavoured to comfort the minds of those that had believed, with the promises that hold out eternal life and happiness. To those that sought the Lord, I applied the gracious declarations of the Old and New Testament which are given for the encouragement of penitents. I endeavoured to lead them to Christ, that they might be saved by grace through faith. I beheld the approach of death and endeavoured to prepare for the worst. When I actually did this office, it was what I looked for and expected some time. These are the reasons that have led me to a contrary to the maxims of the world.

6. But wherefore should I fast and weep now? Can I by such means as these bring back my friends from the world of spirits? Will any efforts of mine restore them to life and give them again to my family? While there was hope of their recovery, I fasted and wept, not knowing whether or not the Lord would be gracious to me, in raising up the afflicted from the bed of languishing. As no positive declaration had been revealed from heaven, that their affliction was unto death, I thought it highly reasonable to continue my religious exercises before God in their behalf. Has

been in David's state, perhaps the solemn declaration of God respecting the death of his child, would have prevented me. But as I had no such declaration to cut off my hope, I continued seeking the Lord in the use of the means; and resolved to abide at the footstool of his throne, till I should see what he would do. But when the King of terrors appeared, and snatched from time into eternity my dear friends, I then perceived it was my duty to submit. It would be a degree of madness in me to act as the world does. I cannot alter the decrees of heaven by any exercises of mine. I cannot be privileged again with the company and conversation of my friends. They have paid the debt of nature, and are gone to rest in Abraham's bosom. Though the body is consigned to the silent tomb, yet the soul lives in the world of spirits.

I shall go unto them, but they shall not return unto me. They live in a more glorious state, who have left this world in the faith of Christ. We cannot conceive what God has laid up for them that love him. If we knew the happiness they enjoy, and the amazing bliss which surrounds them, we should detest the thought of attempting to bring them back to this wilderness, if it were in our power. We are conscious, that nothing would be so painful to those who surround the throne of God, as the idea of being sent back into this world. It would be cruel in us to wish to interrupt their felicity. We should bless God for taking them into such a glorious state. The thoughts of their being at God's right hand, should banish every painful reflection from our minds, and lead us to adore that hand that has safely conducted them to the holy hill of Zion.

If we are the sincere followers of Christ, and continue faithful to death, we shall soon go unto them. The thought of joining the company of those whom we loved on earth, should animate our minds, and lead us to hasten our preparation for that glorious period. We shall soon have done with the things that are seen. The place we fill up in the church and in the world, will soon know us no more for ever. The messenger, death, will receive his commission, and we shall be gathered to our fathers. Perhaps our dearest friends may hover around our beds, and be part of our heavenly convoy, to guard us in safety to the regions above. This two-fold consideration should banish excessive grief from our minds. The happiness of our

friends in the paradise of God, and the prospect of being admitted, in a little time, to go where they are. Can we grieve immoderately with these prospects before us?—Ought we not rather to rejoice in hope of the glory of God? If all that surround us are at a loss to find out the motive from which we act, and if they unite to reproach and persecute, let us patiently endure the contradiction of sinners against ourselves, that we may adorn the doctrine of God our Saviour in all things.

Let us finish the subject with three remarks.

1. It behoves us all to seek that religion which will bring us into subjection to the will of God. If we have recourse to the father of our mercies, by the faith of our Lord Jesus Christ, he will change us from nature to grace. A glorious work of the Spirit will be accomplished in our minds, We shall know the truth, and the truth shall make us free. The ways of God will be pleasant to our minds. All his paths will be flowery and peace before us. Religion will be the delight of our soul. If divine grace reign in us, we shall go on our way rejoicing. We shall forget the things that are behind, and reach to the things which are before. We shall be happy in the things that make for our peace, while we have to do with the things that are seen. If our hearts and lives are dedicated to God, we shall comprehend with all saints, what is the length and breadth, the depth and height, and know the love of Christ which passeth knowledge.

2. We should never forget that all we have, and all we are, belong to God. If he has given us many blessings in this life; if we have affectionate partners, and lovely children; if we find a number of advantages through them; if they help and comfort us in life, and seem anxious to serve us, we should never forget that they are the Lord's.—He has a right to take them to himself in any way, or by any means most agreeable to himself. It is our duty to acquiesce in his will respecting them, on all occasions. If we suffer these reflections to have a suitable influence on our minds, we shall endeavour to guard against undue affection, and seek on all occasions to love them with purity of heart, as well as religious fervour.

3. We should always feel for our friends in their trouble and afford them all the help in our power. But at the same time, we should freely give them up to the Lord
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their God. If he requires their removal, we must submit, however contrary it may be to our natural feelings. If we fast and pray in the time of their affliction, hoping God will be gracious in removing their complaints; yet if he refuse to grant our request, we ought to cry out, "It is the Lord, let him do as he pleaseth." A suitable behaviour in the house of God, and in our own family, will be useful to ourselves, and be servicable to others. They will be led to behold the advantages of true religion exemplified in us, and may be brought to accept of mercy on the terms of the gospel; and be led to seek the same experience which the Lord Jehovah has communicated to us.—We may live happily in the enjoyment of the blessings of the gospel, and die to meet them in heaven, to reign with God in glory for ever.

May the father of all our mercies bless what we have heard to our mutual advantage, that we may be happy in this world, and blessed with a place at his right hand, in the world of spirits, and the praise shall be ascribed to him world without end.

END OF THE FIRST SERMON.

A S E R M O N,

Preached at ASHTON, on the 26th of February,

Immediately after the Funeral of

Mrs. Sarah Kilham,

From REV. xiv. 13.

And I heard a voice from heaven, saying unto me, Write, Blessed are the dead that die in the Lord from henceforth: Yea, saith the Spirit, that they may rest from their labours; and their works do follow them.

IN this chapter we have a description of the glorious time, when the gospel shall be preached in every nation under heaven. But we have at the same time a lively description of the awful judgments which Babylon will have to endure. The miseries they will have to experience, are represented in strong language. The patience of the saints in keeping the commandments of God at this alarming crisis, is held out as worthy of our most serious consideration. To obey the voice of God in prosperity, and be patient in our various engagements in life, is a very great advantage. But to hold fast the beginning of our confidence, without watering, when we are persecuted, and patiently to possess our souls in tribulation, is an infallible proof that we have not believed in vain.

The words of our text are immediately added. Perhaps the voice which St. John heard, was the voice of an angel or of the spirit of a just man made perfect. We are assured from the scriptures, that angels and glorified saints know the advantages which are found at God's right hand.

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The happiness of the dead in the Lord appears so glorious to them, that they might well cry out with this great apostle, Blessed are the dead that die in the Lord from henceforth. This testimony was immediately confirmed and explained, by the Spirit of God — “That they may rest from their labours, and their works do follow them.”

In speaking from this passage, let us first consider what seems necessarily implied in dying in the Lord: And, secondly, explain the blessedness of that state. May that God in whose presence we are assembled on this solemn occasion, divinely help us by his Holy Spirit! Without him we can do nothing. Except he help, vain is the help of man. Let me intreat an interest in the prayers of all that hear, that our meeting together may be for the glory of God and our mutual advantage. Then shall we spend a few moments comfortably with each other, and our meeting together will not be in vain.

I. Let us consider what seems necessarily implied in dying in the Lord.

This expression implies, that we must be in the Lord, according to the sense of the scriptures, before we can die in him.

There is a being professionally in the Lord, on account of our having been baptized in his name while we were in our infancy. It is possible for us, however, notwithstanding we have been dedicated to God by our parents in the ordinance of baptism, to be far from him, and far from righteousness. Among the thousands that are called christians, how very few have any other title to their belonging to Christ, but their having been sprinkled with a little water, while they were young, in the name of the Father, of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost.

We may be notionally in Christ, and yet be destitute of that union which subsists between him and true believers.— Many, because of their attendance on external duty, imagine that they are christians; because they attend upon the ordinances of God, and worship with his people, they suppose they belong to Christ, and have a right to expect the blessings he hath purchased for them. If we have suitable notions of his person, his office, and of the great things he has accomplished for our redemption; if we discover the nature and design of his religion; if we are capable of speaking

speaking upon the doctrines of the gospel with clearness to those that surround us ; if we have done many things for Christ in support of his religion, yet this will avail nothing, unless we obtain a conversion of heart to God, and are united to him by the faith of the gospel.

Previous to our being in Christ according to the sense of the scriptures, we have been deeply convinced of our being far from God, and far from righteousness. We are sensible that our iniquities have caused him to hide his face from us. Our transgressions have been multiplied ; and by them we have been brought into the gall of bitterness, and into the bond of iniquity. We are conscious that our sins are of such a nature, that except the Lord have mercy upon us, we must perish for ever.

Before we are evangelically in Christ, we are awakened to a sense of our depravity and corruption. We see in our flesh dwells no good thing. Our heart is deceitful above all things, and desperately wicked. We are under the influence of the carnal mind, which is enmity against God. We have nothing in our breasts that is according to God. The whole head is sick ; the whole heart is faint ; from the sole of the foot, to the crown of the head, we are nothing but wounds, and bruises, and putrefying sores. We are conscious, that except a change be wrought in us by the Spirit of God, we cannot be happy in this world, or in the world to come.

These discoveries of our state deeply affect us. We are conscious, no man can deliver his own soul. Except we are saved by grace through faith, we must be ruined for ever. We sink beneath our guilt and corruption into a state of self-condemnation. Romans, vii. 25. is the language of our heart. Oh ! wretched man that I am, who shall deliver me from the body of this death ? No way opens to our view that can afford the least hope of pardon or acceptance with God, but the new and living way, which the gospel points out unto us.

Under the influence of our bondage and wretchedness, we are led to seek redemption in the blood of Jesus, the forgiveness of sins. In the means which the Redeemer established, we look up to God, and implore the mercy which has been purchased for us in him. We wait before the Lord, pleading the promises which he has sealed to us in

Christ.

Christ, and determine to continue our addresses to his sacred throne, until he have mercy upon us.

When we are led and assisted by the Spirit to believe in the Lord Jesus with our hearts unto righteousness, then we are brought into the glorious liberty of the Sons of God. We obtain the blessings purchased for us by the blood of the everlasting covenant, and set to our seal that God is true.

We are united to the Lord Jesus. We are ingrafted into him. He is the true olive, and from him all our blessings flow. Being cemented to him by the influences of the Holy Spirit, as the graft is to the stock, we are made alive in him our gracious benefactor. And being made one Spirit with him, our souls are made happy by his blessing. The sacred unction proceeding from Christ is communicated to us; and being united to him in this glorious mystical union, we are enabled to bear fruit unto holiness, that our end may be everlasting life.

Jesus Christ tells us he is the true vine. Believers are in him, as the branch is in the vine. As the branch cannot bear fruit of itself, neither can we, except we abide in him. Every branch in him the Father prunes that it may bear more fruit. He communicates grace from his fulness, and by it we are enabled to prosper in our way to heaven.

He is our living head, and we are members of his body, of his flesh, and of his bones. As no member can perform the offices belonging to it, except it continue connected with the head, neither can we, except we continue united to the Lord Jesus. But by the communications of wisdom and influence from him our living head, it is possible for us to fill up our place in the church, and in the world, to his glory.

The scriptures inform us, that those who are in Christ, have fellowship with the Father and the Son. By this fellowship they grow up into Christ. They increase in holiness and righteousness before him. They seek to be made like him, that they may live with him for ever.

They seek daily to follow his doctrine and example in all things. His word is our rule. It is a light unto our feet, and a lanthorn to our paths. His spirit becomes our guide. He directs our feet in the way of peace. By following the Lord Jesus in the regeneration, through good and evil report, in honour and dishonour, we grow in grace, and in the knowledge of God our Saviour. We increase in the likeness to him, and ripen for the inheritance of the saints

saints in light. Having our hearts and affections placed on things above, we hold ourselves in readiness to bid adieu to the things that are seen, whenever the Lord shall require our souls at our hands.

To die in the Lord, is to die reconciled to him, and in his favour. Being reconciled to God by the faith of our Lord Jesus Christ, they find a peace which passeth all understanding. The light of the countenance of the Great Jehovah shines upon them. They can look up with confidence and cry out, "My Lord and my God." This experience is always accompanied with such a divine sense of acceptance, as enables us to rejoice with joy unspeakable, and full of glory.

The scriptures assure us, that the favour of God is better than the life itself. Divine tokens of favour are communicated to our hearts, on our believing in the Son of God. Now a christian looks up with confidence in the approach of death. He is assured he is not going to meet an angry Judge. A God that will take vengeance of him. Nor has he any apprehensions that he will have the Eternal Jehovah his adversary in the world of spirits. On the contrary, he views with pleasure the glorious description the scriptures give of his gracious Benefactor. He considers him as his covenant Father. A friend, sticking closer to his people than a brother. Ready on all occasions to impart good to his own children. Never disposed to cast off any that have by faith upon him. Infinitely near the souls that trust in him: especially in the times of their adversity. Views of this nature animate the dying christian, and lead him to cast his all into the hands of his faithful Creator, not fearing but the promises suitable to his state, will be fulfilled in his experience.

2. Believers die in the Lord, possessed of that piety and love which his soul delights in. They are not only justified fully by his grace, through the redemption which is in Christ Jesus, but they experience a new birth unto righteousness. They are brought to inherit a lot among the saints that are sanctified: Principles of piety are formed in the heart. Their graces are watered by the streams of the river which makes glad the city of God. They evidence their piety in their tempers and dispositions. Those who see them, admire the grace of God, which dwells in their breast, and which they improve to his glory. As

piety in the heart always expresses itself in a suitable conversation, the followers of Jesus Christ endeavour to let their light shine before men, that they may see their good works and glorify their Father who is in heaven.

The servants of the living God are made partakers of that love which passeth knowledge. Faith and hope are graces of the Spirit, which every christian rejoices in; but love surpasseth them both. When their office is ended, we will continue and encrease, through the ages of ages. In our first conversion to the religion of Jesus, this divine principle is formed in our heart: And as faith increaseth, love abounds in the soul. Those that have lived for a number of years, serving God with readiness of mind, find their love amazingly increased toward the Lord, and all mankind. It often happens, the nearer the believer comes to the end of his journey, the more his heart is warmed with this celestial fire. A new convert may confine his love to his own sect or party; and a bigot may have a contracted spirit toward all that do not think and speak as he does. The superstitious, and those that contend for a party, may imagine they ought not to be too charitable to those who do not walk with them; but the christian, that has grown in grace, and in the knowledge of Jesus Christ, experiences such enlargement of soul in the approach of death, as often confounds all that behold him. He may love with peculiar affection the sincere of his own party; but, at the same time, his heart burns with the purest affection toward all that love the Lord Jesus Christ in sincerity. Names, and sects, and parties, fall before this divine principle. Whoever bears the image and superscription of Christ, whatever be his profession, or whatever be the sect or party to which he belongs, he claims him for a brother, beloved of God, and determines to give him the right hand of fellowship. He loves his neighbour as himself, in the sense the scriptures require; and he loves his enemies from principle, as well as because Jesus Christ has commanded it. Happy the man who feels this love increasing, as his days increase! Happy for the dying christian who finds, that all the waters that are poured from every quarter are sanctified of God, and are made like oil to this flame! This principle is abundantly stronger than death. It disarms the king of terrors. It leads the believer boldly into the valley, and enables him to go forward courageously. He fears no evil, because the God of love is with him. His rod, and his staff, abundantly support.

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3. The christian dies, with a meetness wrought in him for the presence of the Lord. By looking through the glass of the word to the perfections of the Deity, he is changed into his image, from glory to glory, by the holy Spirit. Every root of bitterness is removed from his heart. He is fully sanctified throughout, body, soul, and spirit. He has apprehended that for which he was apprehended of God. He has attained the measure of the stature of the fulness of Christ. He has reached the mark towards which he has been pressing, since his conversion. He is as a shock of corn, fully prepared for the heavenly garner. His graces are ripened and come to maturity. He is made meet for the inheritance of the saints in light. His lamp is trimmed; his light shines; and, he is waiting to hear the bridegroom's voice. Happy state! May we awake up after the likeness of our glorious Redeemer, the when it is our lot to die, we may be found in him, without spot, and blameless!

4. A christian dies in the true faith and hope of the gospel. They know in whom they have believed. In the conflicts with the king of terrors, they can cry out, "death, where is thy sting? O grave, where is thy victory? I know that my Redeemer liveth; and though, after my skin, worms destroy this body, yet in my flesh I shall see God: whom I shall see for myself and not another." The man of God stands on the brink of eternity and declares with the great apostle, "I have fought a good fight; I have finished my course; I have kept the faith; henceforth, there is laid up for me, a crown of righteousness which the Lord, the righteous Judge, will give me in that day." It is impossible to describe the influence this faith has upon the soul. It is ten thousand times more precious than the gold that is purified. It opens to the believer the invisible world. It leads the christian to his glorious views of the promised land.

The hope of the gospel dwells in the hearts of true believers. It is blooming and full of immortality: It enables the christian to ride safe in the midst of the tempestuous ocean of trouble and pain. If the storms of affliction are extremely severe, hope is like an anchor to the soul; it is both sure and steadfast. It is surely fixed in the wounds of the crucified. It is steadfast. It will bear up the christian through the conflict. It will never fail to be of service

those who hope to the end. The advantages of this blessed principle are frequently experienced in times of health and strength. But they are abundantly greater to those who pass through the dreary valley to the inheritance above. Faith and hope help the believer to cross the Jordan of death; but they cannot enter Canaan with him. In that glorious place,

“ Faith is lost in sight,
And hope in full supreme delight,
And everlasting love.”

5. They frequently die rejoicing in the blessed prospect of eternity. This is not the experience of all. Some of the followers of Christ have severe conflicts to pass through in their latest moments. Bodily afflictions sink their spirits. Strong temptations attack their minds. The overflows of sensible comfort are withheld. Their fears may be awakened, and they may imagine that the Lord will cast them off for ever. This has been the experience of thousands, whose lives have ornamented their profession for a number of years. It would be extremely illiberal in us to pronounce, That none are admitted to the right hand of God, but those who die in the triumph of faith. Such a rash assertion would doom to hell a vast number of the followers of Christ, who left this world much as their Divine Master expired on the cross. They cried out in their trouble, and were exceedingly affected, because their minds were not particularly comforted. If in the agony of dying they exclaimed, “ My God, my God, why hast thou forsaken me ? ” It would be wrong in us to conclude, that they were cast off, because they could never bear testimony that the Lord had graciously returned to them in sensible comforts and love. After our gracious Redeemer made use of the words above quoted, we never read of his having comfortable manifestations of the presence of God, before he cried out, “ It is finished, and gave up the ghost.” It would be blasphemous in us to declare, because he died in this way, that he was cast off from the Father for ever. Let us then be careful how we pronounce upon others, lest, by rash judgment, we should contract guilt upon our conscience.

Yet it is the lot of many of the followers of Christ, to leave this world rejoicing in the prospect that opens to their view. Like Stephen, the heavens appear to open to them.

them. They behold the Lord Jesus ready to receive them. And rejoice in the prospect of appearing before him, prepared as a bride for her husband. They have been able to witness a good confession before many. Like good old Simeon, they have cried out, "Lord, now lettest thou thy servant depart in peace according to thy word, for mine eyes have seen thy salvation, which thou hast prepared before the face of all people." Let us ever remember, whether we have a triumphant death, or a severe conflict in the agony of dying, if we are only found in Christ, without spot and blameless, we shall be happy through the ages of eternity.

II. Let us now consider the blessedness of their state. They rest from their labours, and their works do follow them. In these two declarations is summed up the happiness of the death of the righteous.

They rest from their labours. From all bodily exercise. Many of the followers of Christ are obliged to rise early and late take rest, labouring hard every day for the bread that perishes. They are so harassed in business, that they scarcely can spare time to accomplish the duties which the scriptures require of them. Many times they are fatigued with the exercises they are called to pass through, that they are obliged to be absent from the worship of God, when their spirit would willingly attend, but the body is worn out with hard labour, and must have rest. Six days in the week are they obliged to pursue this plan, otherwise they could not provide for their families. Were they to slacken their hand in business, to give themselves to more religious duties, they would neglect their partners and children, and consequently deny the faith, and be worse than Infidels. In the present disordered state of things, thousands are daily labouring beyond their strength, merely to support a wretched existence upon earth; while multitudes are living in idleness, indulging themselves with everything their hearts can desire. When death closes our eyes, we shall cease from all manual labour: the hours we spend in it will be employed by us (if we die in the Lord) in adoring God and the Lamb. Oh! how the souls of the laborious poor, and those that have been daily harassed in business, will triumph, when they are freed from their daily chain, and have done with the services of life!

2. They rest from the labours of the mind, as they rest from the things of this life: The mind is often called from greater subjects to meditate on what is necessary to be attended to in this life. If we have a family to provide for—a business to pursue—a place to fill up in the church or the world to the glory of God, our minds are frequently called to attend particularly to our affairs and situation. We too often find our thoughts taken up with these things in our closet, in the duties of our family, in social religion, and in public worship. If a person obtain grace to leave the thoughts of the world behind, while he is engaged in religious exercises, yet how much he is obliged to study and contrive the best mode of acting, in the things that belong to his situation. It frequently happens, that the labours of the mind are more painful, than bodily exercise. Especially when a vast number of concerns rest on one person. But when death releases us from this bodily chain, the world will occupy our thoughts no more for ever. We shall have our whole souls lost in heavenly meditations and spiritual exercises: To have our mind released from every thing that agitates it here, and all our soul at liberty to depend only on God, will be a glorious release. This will be our experience, if we die in the Lord.

3. They rest from all the disorders and infirmities incident to human life. Many are the afflictions of the righteous in this world: Thousands of the followers of the Son of God are frequently chosen in the furnace of affliction.—Many diseases are exceedingly oppressive: they are a burden that can scarcely be supported. Many have a sore heart and conflict with the infirmities and disorders which are long to their lot. Wearisome nights, and troublesome days are appointed for them; they are obliged to toss to and fro upon their beds, seeking rest, but cannot find it.—While others are blessed with health to pursue their business, many are laid on beds of languishing. While many of the followers of Christ have strength to attend upon the ordinances of God, they are confined in their own habitations. Many had nothing to grapple with but the infirmities of a weak constitution, or of old age, these are frequently obliged to bear; they cause those that sustain them to go on heavily in the bitterness of their trouble. None can describe the sore labour and distress which persons are called to pass through, that are subject to disease and infirmities. But

when death comes, they will be released from their bodily chain. All the afflictions of life will be ended. Nothing shall disquiet or perplex them again for ever. The happy spirit released from its imprisoned state, will never be a companion again to frail mortality. The body sown in corruption, shall be raised incorruptible, and be a suitable companion for the immortal spirit through the ages of eternity. Let us then look forward to that glorious season when mortality shall be swallowed up of life.

4. The righteous rest from all the exercises which are occasioned by the adversary of mankind. The prince of the power of the air goes about as a roaring lion, seeking whom he may devour. He attacks the followers of Christ on every side. Unless they resist him stedfastly in the faith they will be overcome. It often happens, that what cannot be accomplished by violence, he attempts by stratagem. He lays snares for the souls which he seeks to entangle. He is unwearied in his efforts to destroy. It is impossible to describe the methods he pursues to ruin those, who seek to glorify God. Hence a life devoted to religion is called warfare. Every soldier of Christ must fight his way through. He has snares to shun, and open violence to counter. He must either conquer or lose his soul. When the conflicts have been numerous, and on certain occasions victory appeared uncertain, we must hold ourselves in readiness to go forth to the war again, when our enemies renew their attacks. Perhaps there is scarcely a day in our life but we must be wrestling with principalities and powers, with the rulers of the darkness of this world, and with wicked spirits in high places. They will harass us with strong temptations in our closet, in the duties of the family, in the church, and in the world. But if we have the whole armour of God upon us, it will be possible to go on from conquering to conquer. We shall be able in the strength of Jehovah to gain the conquest, and to put to flight all that are seeking our ruin.

But when death receives his commission, he discharges from this war. All the conflicts we have experienced are then ended. How happy are they, who have nothing to do with temptation, but are out of the reach of the grand deceiver of the brethren! They have done with all their ritual armour, and are crowned in the presence of God. They bear palms of victory in their hands, and triumph

all their enemies! They shall never be called to put on their armour again, but shall have to sing the song of Moses, and of the Lamb, world without end!

5. They rest from all the labours occasioned by wicked and unreasonable men. It is very difficult to keep a conscience void of offence towards men, as well as towards God. The persons we are called to spend most of our time with, may be daily laying snares for our souls. When we have to transact business with sinners, they will do every thing in their power to lead us from God. They will use every scheme they can devise, to entice us to sin. And if apparent kindness will not allure us into their snare, they will try what violence will do. They will attempt to compel us to join with them in many things forbidden in the scriptures. If they cannot prevail on us to act contrary to the gospel, many of them will revile, reproach, and say all manner of evil of us. They will seek to injure us in our character, our family, or our business. If they cannot succeed at first, they will be unwearied in their efforts to prevent our happiness. Unless we possess the wisdom of the serpent, and are harmless as doves, it will not be easy to prosper. Except the mighty power of the God of Jacob surround us, we shall be entangled and brought into bondage. We are commanded to watch unto prayer, that we may be kept unspotted from the world. We are charged to come out from among the ungodly and be separate.—We are to have no fellowship with the unfruitful works of darkness.—We are neither to touch, nor taste, nor handle the things which the Lord has forbidden.—The maxims and fashions of the world are to be conquered.—These duties cannot be accomplished without much exercise. Many are the labours which a christian experiences from this quarter. But when death has done his office we shall be taken, where the wicked cease to trouble, and where the weary shall be for ever at rest. No sinner can disturb the repose of those that sleep in Jesus. They shall be,

“Far from a world of grief and sin,
With God eternally shut in.”

It will be an amazing change to them. What a glorious release will immediately succeed this painful conflict! The inhabitants are all righteous in that glorious place. Not a temptation

temptation shall be presented before the blessed in heaven, through the ages of eternity. They shall be screened as in the hollow of his hand. And know war no more for ever.

6. Many exercises are occasioned to the followers of Christ while they are in this world, by weak or false brethren. Many are weak in the faith. They are unstable as water. Soon lifted up above measure, or cast down beyond the bounds of moderation. You never can have any hold of them. It is not safe to place any particular confidence in them. They occasion themselves a great deal of trouble, and cause the sincere followers of Christ a number of exercises on their account. They endeavour to lead them into the good and right way. To direct them to Christ, where they may obtain establishment in the truth. They watch over them for good continually, and are exceedingly desirous of being of service to them, in their way to heaven. They spare no labour to get them fixed, if possible, on the rock of eternal ages.

They have also to do with false brethren. Persons that pretend to religion, who have not the root of the matter in them. They have a name to live, but are dead while alive. Some base ends are the object of their pursuit. If this be concealed for a season, it will be discovered sooner or later. When their hypocrisy is manifest, the followers of Christ have a number of things to encounter, to prevent their designs, and to have them separated from their community. It often happens, that persons of this description become the most violent persecutors that the church has to grapple with. When their base ends cannot be accomplished and their hypocrisy is exposed, they are enraged, and study to injure the very men that have been seeking their salvation. They will join any party to oppose and persecute: and they often appear more zealous in this diabolical work, than those who never professed any religion. Many are the exercises which they occasion the followers of Christ. When they have finished their course on earth, every labour of this nature will be ended for ever. Weak brethren will not perplex them there. There will be no feeble souls in the thousands that are found at God's right hand. Hypocrites or false brethren, shall have no place in the New Jerusalem. They will not be admitted to perplex them again.

again. Every exercise they occasioned them on earth shall be ended, and their souls completely delivered from their rage.

7. From all the outward exercises of religion, which are commanded in the scriptures, and must be attended to while we are in this wilderness. We are commanded to work out our salvation with fear and trembling.—To strive to make our calling and election sure.—To seek to be found in Christ without spot and blameless.—We are to watch and pray.—To wait upon God in his ordinances.—To glorify him in our bodies and spirits which are his. These, and other duties equally binding, require much attention. It is impossible to neglect them with a good conscience. The spirit is frequently willing, but the flesh is weak. We have to conquer the backwardness of our own hearts, and are obliged to use violence with ourselves to accomplish the good, and acceptable, and perfect will of God. Every day brings new services with it. And were we to grow cold and indifferent, we should be in danger of losing our souls. We cannot with safety slacken our hand, till we have finished the work which the Lord has given us to do. We must forget the things that are behind, and reach to the things which are before, pressing toward the mark, for the prize of our high calling of God in Christ Jesus. But when death frees us from our bodily chain, we shall have done with every religious exercise that belongs to this life. Attending upon the means of grace—Watching and prayer—Striving to be found in Christ, &c. &c. &c. will then all be ended. A glorious change will take place, and the righteous will be employed in praising God and the Lamb for ever and ever.

Whatever can be called a labour, or whatever is an exercise to the mind, and is attended with circumstances that occasion any distress, shall all have an end at death. The christian shall rest from all the labours that belong to his pilgrimage through this wilderness. All his conflicts will be ended. He shall have nothing to vex or perplex him in heaven. The rest he will obtain cannot be described. His soul shall be lost and swallowed up in God. His tranquillity and happiness, in that blessed state, will be of such a nature, that it will fill him with wonder, love, and praise, for ever.

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They rest from their labours, and their works do follow them. Good works do not go before, to open the gate of heaven to us. We are saved by grace, through faith. Not by works of righteousness, which we have done, but by his mercy he saves us. Jesus Christ has passed into the holy of holies to appear before God in our behalf. He has opened a new and living way to eternal happiness. He is preparing mansions, in the heavens, for his people. The gate that admits believers into the New Jerusalem, is only accessible by his blood. We must be admitted into the joy of our Lord by his undertaking, or never be made partakers of it. The scriptures exclude works from any merit before God. They clearly affirm, that Jesus Christ alone can save. That we must receive eternal life as a free gift. We must have a place at God's right hand, without money or price. Works are entirely excluded in this matter. They cannot save us either in whole or in part.

Yet notwithstanding this is the case, the scriptures strictly enjoin, that he who has believed, should be careful to maintain good works. Every christian is called upon to show the truth of his faith, by suitable works. If a man professes that he is a christian, and his actions do not correspond with his profession, he deceives his own soul, and strives to impose upon others. Every good tree bringeth forth good fruit. We are commanded to add to our faith virtue, to virtue knowledge, to knowledge temperance, to temperance patience, to patience godliness, to godliness brotherly kindness, and to brotherly kindness charity. The apostle declares, if these things are in us and abound, they will make us that we shall be neither barren nor unfruitful, in the knowledge of the Lord Jesus Christ. Good works are the fruit of faith. If we really possess the vital power of godliness in our own souls, our life and conversation will testify that we have not believed in vain. St. Paul charges us to be steadfast, unmoveable, always abounding in the work of the Lord. In another place, he says, "Ye have your fruit unto holiness, and your end everlasting life." The scriptures are so particular and express on this head, that it appears amazingly strange, how any professors of religion should imagine, that true faith, working by love in the heart, should admit of a life contrary to the gospel of God our Saviour. Those that truly believe, must be careful

ful to maintain good works. It is our duty to glorify God in our bodies and spirits which are his.

If our works are not admitted to go before to prepare us a place in heaven, our text informs us they will follow. Every service we perform by the faith of the holy Spirit, according to the divine will, shall not lose its reward. All works of piety towards God; all works of self-denial and mortification towards ourselves; all works of brotherly-love and tenderness towards our christian brethren; every act of mercy or charity, shall have a gracious reward. Not so much as a cup of cold water can be given to a disciple of Christ's, in the name of the Lord, but what shall be thought of by him, and rewarded in due time. He that has sown plentifully for eternity in this life, shall reap plentifully. He that has endeavoured to glorify God in his body and spirit, and also with his substance, shall meet with a glorious entrance into the kingdom of heaven, through the blood of the everlasting covenant, and none of his works shall be forgotten. It is impossible so much as to imagine, what the Lord has prepared for his people in the world of spirits. Eye hath not seen, ear hath not heard, what God has laid up for those that love him.

If we could get to heaven in any respect by the merit of our works, it would be a loss to us. We should have heaven then in part as a purchase. But now we receive it as a free gift from God; and, instead of any of our services going before to procure us a place there, they will all follow us to that celestial place. This thought should lead us to adore the God of our mercies, for providing so richly for our future happiness in Christ, and for assuring us that every work of faith, and labour of love, shall be rewarded in glory for ever.

1. Having made these remarks on the passage, suffer me to entreat you, my dear brethren, to examine your own hearts before God. Except we are brought to know that we are united to him by the faith of his Spirit, we cannot be happy. Unless we know that we have a living union with Christ, our living head, we cannot prosper in the things that make for our peace. We must be brought united to him, and have communications of his grace to our hearts, otherwise we shall always be in danger. Should death find us before we are interested in the Son of God, the scriptures assure us, where he is we cannot be admitted. The gate of

of heaven is only open to believers. Without are all kinds of sinners, who would not have Christ to reign over them. They must be cast off from God, and from the glory of his power, world without end.

2. If we are brought into the glorious liberty of the gospel, let us hold fast the beginning of our confidence without wavering to the end. The place that now knows us, will soon know us no more for ever. We ought to give diligence to be found in Christ without spot and blameless. Should we be found trifling when death comes, we shall have to repent of our conduct. But if we make it the business of our life, to follow the Lord Jesus in the regeneration, we shall have the answer of a good conscience, and a lively hope of eternal happiness. By patient continuance in well doing, let us seek for glory, honour, immortality, and eternal life. Let us consider one another, and provoke unto love and good works. Let us ever remember, that this is not our rest, but that we are hastening through this wilderness, to the promised land. If we endure hardness as good soldiers of Christ, we shall find the advantage of it, when we have done with the things that are seen. Should we constantly watch unto prayer, that we may be kept unspotted from the world; should we ever be hastening to accomplish the good, and acceptable, and perfect will of God; should we pursue our engagements in life with a single eye to the glory of God, ever keeping eternal things in view, while we are passing through the temporal concerns of life, the God of peace will abundantly bless us. He will cause the light of his countenance to shine upon us. We shall feel the consolations of his Holy Spirit abounding to us in Christ Jesus, and our hearts will exceedingly rejoice in his love. The prospect of death will not be painful. We shall look beyond the vale of tears to the holy hill of Zion, and triumph in the prospect of the great things which will be conferred upon us when our conflicts are ended.

3. May the God of our mercies release us all from the bondage of corruption, and bring us into the liberty of his children! May he impart to each of us that faith which works by love, and purifies the heart! May he powerfully assist us by his Spirit, that we may cheerfully do and suffer his will on earth, seeking his glory in every thing we take in hand! May he help us to take up our cross

deny ourselves, and follow him fully all our days ! May he enable us to grow up into Christ our living head in all things ; that we, increasing with the increase of God, may be fully prepared for our great change ! May he strengthen us to meet death with christian fortitude ; that when we are called to pass through the dreary valley, we may fear no evil, but find our spirits borne up in the agony of dying ! When we are called to quit this mournful vale, may the God of our mercies receive us to share with the blessed, in the inheritance which is incorruptible, undefiled, and which fadeth not away ! And may he lead us to living fountains of water, that we may have to triumph in his presence, and to cast our crowns before him, while we adore Father, Son, and Holy Spirit for ever and ever !—God grant us these mercies, for the sake of Jesus Christ, our only Redeemer !—Amen.

END OF THE SECOND SERMON.

A S E R M O N,

Preached at MOSLEY, near ASHTON,

The same Evening that

Mrs. Sarah Kilham

WAS BURIED,

From Hebrews ix. 27.

It is appointed unto Men once to die, but after this the
Judgment.

IN this chapter St. Paul endeavours to show the difference between the law and the gospel. Under the Jewish dispensation, the High Priest was obliged once in the year to appear before God in the holy of holies, to sprinkle the mercy-seat with the blood of the sacrifices. He was commanded of God to renew the ceremony every year, to put the Jews in remembrance of their state, and to typify the sufferings of the Son of God. Almost every thing under the law was purged with blood; and without shedding of blood there is no remission. The apostle says, "It was therefore necessary that the pattern of the things in heaven should be purified with these; but the heavenly things with better sacrifices. For Christ is not entered into the holy place made with hands, which are the figures of the true, but into heaven itself, now to appear in the presence of God for us. Nor yet that he should offer himself often, as the High Priest entereth into the holy place every year with the blood of others." In these words we clearly perceive how infinitely superior the Lord Jesus was to any that officiated under the dispensation of Moses. It behoved the Jews to purify the pattern of heavenly things by the blood

of their sacrifices, but things of a superior nature must be purified by better sacrifices.

If Christ had been like the High Priest under the law, "Then he must have often suffered since the foundation of the world: but now once in the end of the world hath he appeared to put away sin by the sacrifice of himself. And as it is appointed to men, once to die, but after this the judgment; so Christ was once offered to bear the sins of many; and unto them that look for him shall he appear the second time without sin unto salvation." Having once suffered for sin, the just for the unjust, that he might bring us to God, he will no more appear as a Man of Sorrows, to offer himself a second time for the sins of the people, but when he appears again in the clouds of heaven, it will be without a sin-offering, unto the complete salvation of all that believe in him.

Though the words of our text are only introduced to illustrate the subject which St. Paul was writing upon, yet they contain a truth that should be frequently considered by us all.

In considering this passage, I shall first call your attention to the appointment of God, respecting our death and future judgment. And then, Secondly, endeavour to show the difference between the righteous and wicked, both at death and at the solemn tribunal of the Judge of quick and dead. As the subject is very important, let us plead with God to grant us the help of his Spirit, that we may be enabled right'y to divide the word of truth. If we intreat him in his great mercy to meet with us at this time, we shall be favoured with an answer to our feeble requests, and our worship will be both acceptable to God, and a blessing to ourselves.

I. Let us consider the appointment of God, as it refers to our death, and future judgment.

1. When God formed man out of the dust of the earth, and breathed into him the breath of life, he was possessed of every thing his heart could wish for, in the Garden of Paradise. He had no corruption in his nature, nor any inclination to any thing that was evil. He was holy, harmless, and undefiled before God. It was his meat and drink to do the will of his heavenly Father. He was constantly engaged in such services as were pleasing to the Almighty.—

He knew no sin, neither was guile found in his mouth. Had he stood in that blessed state, death never would have come near him. It is probable, after he had continued enjoying God and glorifying his name, he would have increased in holiness and conformity to his Maker. And after he had continued a suitable time in the garden of Eden, he might have been translated into a more glorious state, and been blessed with greater advantages. The God of his mercies might have taken him near to his throne, and given him every blessing his exalted nature would have been capable of enjoying.

But the scriptures inform us, by the subtilty of the grand adversary, making use of the wisdom of the serpent, our first parents were prevailed upon to eat of the fruit which God had forbidden. And through their disobedience, death entered into the world. They lost that union with God which they had formerly enjoyed, which brought spiritual death into their soul. By their transgression they became mortal; subject to infirmities and natural death. And at the same time exposed themselves to the pains of the second death. This is a subject greatly enlarged upon by many of the sacred writers. They speak of it under different views, and show us the awful state we are brought into through the fall.

2. The solemn decree passed soon after sin entered into the world: "Dust thou art, and unto dust thou shalt return." Or as it is expressed in our text, "It is appointed to men once to die." Before the flood many lived to a very great age. They were continued for a long season, that the earth might be peopled, and well supplied with inhabitants. But after many of them had lived more than nine hundred years, death arrested them. Their history, after relating their birth and age, with a few particulars of their life, concludes, "And he died." The place they had so long possessed in this world, knew them no more forever. What the poet expresses on another subject, was applicable to them:

"All ends in—Here he lies."

In the Old and New Testament, we only read of two persons that escaped from this world without seeing death. After Enoch had walked with God, and glorified him in his body and spirit, he was translated that he should not see death.

After

After Elijah had filled up a place in the Jewish church to the honour of his profession, and had passed through a great number of hardships on account of his faithfulness in warning his countrymen, he also was translated. Death had no dominion over either of them. It is probable, the same change was wrought in them, which will be wrought in the saints, when the Lord Jesus appears to reign with his saints. St. Paul says, "And we which are alive shall be changed, in a moment, in the twinkling of an eye: and be caught up to meet the Lord in the air." What thousands of millions has the king of terrors removed from the face of the earth! Our fathers, where are they? And the generations of old, into what place have they entered? Though so many millions have fallen beneath his influence, he still is daily hurrying thousands out of time into eternity. He seems determined to continue his efforts, while his reign shall continue.

3. Death is a king that bids defiance to all. Old and young; rich and poor; male and female, must bid adieu to their friends, when he has received his commission. He is stronger than all the efforts that are made against him. If the afflicted unto death be in circumstances to call in physicians without number; and if he suppose, in the midst of a multitude of counsellors, on his case, there is safety, what are all their efforts against this voracious conqueror? Will their wisdom out-wit him in his attacks? Will their efforts prevent him from giving the fatal blow? If they collect medicine from all parts of the globe, and compound them with all the art and skill they possess, will this stay his hand, and be an hedge about the afflicted, to preserve from his shafts? Can they set bounds to him, and then say, "Hitherto shalt thou come, and no farther; here shall thy proud waves be stayed?"—Should they call in the help of the best ministers under heaven, and endeavour to ward off the stroke of death by a multitude of prayers, would these screen the object doomed to die? Would they prevent the king of terrors from executing his commission, when the time is come to remove the living to the silent grave? Does he not laugh at the vain efforts of mortals to stay his hand, and defy their united skill and influence? Will he not break through every barrier, and arrest the prisoner in the midst of surrounding friends?

4. He generally sends his harbingers to proclaim his approach. Yet he often comes suddenly to many, who expected both riches and length of days. Plague, pestilence, famine, and war, are awful harbingers of death. When these appear, death is near to myriads. When these harbingers go forth, it is in general a certain sign of thousands upon thousands being on the brink of eternity. A number of disorders that prevail are also the harbingers of death to individuals. When affliction seizes the body, we should remember death is on his way. And should our troubles be removed, and our life be given to us a few years for a prey, we should not forget that we are mortal; nor that death may suddenly arrest us afterwards. The infirmities of old age, as well as a number of lingering diseases, are the sure harbingers of death. If we attend to their voice, and improve the privilege of the timely notice they afford us, infinite good may be the consequence. But should we be deaf to their warning, we may have to repent, when it will be of no service to us.

Death, however, frequently comes as a thief in the night. He seizes thousands in a moment, and hurries them out of time into eternity. How often the public papers inform us of sudden fires or accidents, which destroy a number of our fellow creatures! Many go well from their habitation in the morning, but are brought dead to their families before the evening shades return. Thousands have gone healthy to seek rest in sleep at night, and have been found dead in the morning. Many have sat down to eat the bread that perishes, and while they have been thus engaged, their spirit has been required at their hands. We may truly say, "In the midst of life, we are in death—We walk on snare and death wherever we go." It is observed by some that an object ever pressing upon our view, soon becomes familiar; and though exceedingly alarming at first, may become less dreaded, though equally dangerous. Is there any thing more alarming than sudden death? Can any thing be more awful than for a man to be snatched from his friends in a moment, and be numbered with the dead? If we should only hear of this once in our life, would it not make our ears tingle? If we were only to be privy to one instance, would it not seize our heart with terror? But the frequency of sudden death has made it familiar to us. Many accounts reach us in the course of a year of this

ture, that we lose our dread for this kind of exit into eternity: And because we have seen so many instances ourselves, we are not affected with the subject. But are we any safer because sudden or natural death is become an object of indifference to us? Ought we not to be alarmed at the thought of dying unprepared for a better world?—Dr. Watts observes, there is something awful in sudden death even to believers. He thinks it would be highly advantageous to them, to have some little notice of their approaching dissolution, that they might trim their lamps, and prepare for their heavenly bridegroom. If sudden death have something in it alarming to the followers of Christ, ought it not to awaken the fears of sinners? And ought we not all to consider, that the Lord may permit this kind of death to be our lot?

5. Many of you have seen emblematical figures of death, with a dart in his hand. In those prints he is generally, if not always represented without eyes, without ears, and without bowels. He has no eyes to see the distress he will bring into a family, by removing the head of it. He does not see the wretched state the fatherless and widow will be plunged into by his means. If a beloved child languish under his hand, or an affectionate wife, he does not see the anguish he will plunge the survivors into, by tearing from their embrace, those that are dearer to them than life itself. Whatever miseries he brings upon individuals, upon families, or society, by removing those that have been useful in life, he is blind to them all. If he be intreated to stay his hand, and spare those that he levels his dart against, he has no ears to attend to their supplications. Should the whole family together, with all that live in the neighbourhood, join in their application to him, he would be deaf to all their intreaties. When the priests of Baal cried mightily to their idol, to hear and deliver, he did not hear, and therefore he could not answer. Were we to pursue the same measures with the king of terrors, no answer would be given, were we ever so earnest in our application. He has no bowels of compassion to yearn over the distressed. Some tyrants have been moved to pity the wretched in their distress. Though they have in general delighted in blood, yet it has been remarked, on certain occasions, there have been faint discoveries of humanity left in them. But death has never been known to relent. He delights in slaughter and blood.

He

He never has been known to pity a single individual, when his commission was sealed. It is in vain to attempt to affect him by alarming representations of the miseries which he will occasion, should he persist in his design. We read of a great man, brought to the brink of death, under fearful apprehensions of future misery, who offered, if I mistake not, thirty thousand pounds for an hour's life—But his offer would not be accepted. There is no bribing death with gold and silver. He cannot be enriched by them, or receive any advantage through their influence. We may fix it in our hearts, that he will be inflexible in his purpose, if once he is commissioned of God to remove us from among the living.

6. After death the judgment. Some persons have supposed, that the souls of the righteous and wicked both appear before God, as soon as they quit this world, and are appointed to their different places by his judgment. Hades, or the world of spirits, is considered as the place where both good and evil spirits are to abide. Only that part called Paradise, or Abraham's bosom, where the spirits of just men made perfect, are as happy and satisfied as it is possible for them to be, in their present state, has no connection with the regions of darkness and despair. The spirits of the righteous look forward to the morning of the resurrection, when the body, sown in corruption, shall be raised incorruptible, and be united to their glorified spirits, to be completely happy for ever. The wicked are confined in a most wretched situation, under great torture and misery, till the Lord Jesus shall come to judge the world in righteousness. We may have a thousand conjectures of the state of the righteous and wicked, till the day of judgment. The scriptures in this are our infallible guide. If we advert to them, we shall learn what the living Jehovah says on the subject. They inform us, that just men made perfect will enter into the joy of their Lord, immediately after death. They will be admitted, where the wicked shall cease to trouble, and where the weary shall be for ever at rest. On the other hand, all that die in their sin, where Christ is they can never come. They will be cast off from God, and from the glory of his power for ever.

But whatever judgment takes place at death, we are assured, there is a day approaching in which God will judge the secrets of all hearts by Christ Jesus. All nation

will

will be summoned to his bar, and have to answer for the deeds done in the body. We have many declarations in the sacred pages of the great things which will be accomplished at that solemn event. The sun shall be turned into darkness, and the moon into blood. The stars will fall from their orbits, while the elements melt with fervent heat. The trump of God will sound through all nations, and the dead, small and great, will have to appear before him that will judge righteously.—But as we shall have to speak more particularly on this subject in a little while, I hasten to the second part of the subject.

II. That is, to shew the difference there is between the righteous and wicked in their death, and will be hereafter at the bar of God.

1. There is a vast difference in their experience. A good man has been led to confess and forsake his sin. To seek redemption in the Lord Jesus. He has obtained by the faith of Christ, life from the dead. His heart is converted to God. He is born again of the Spirit. Old things are passed away, behold all things are become new in his experience! He feels living faith, working by love, purifying his heart. He enjoys the benefits of true religion, and goes on his way rejoicing in the God of his salvation. But a sinner is hardened in the midst of his crimes. He cleaves to the ways of the destroyer with all his heart. He continues to follow the maxims and fashions of the world, instead of seeking mercy and salvation in Christ, he spurns the offers of the gospel, and is deaf to the voice of the Lord. No conversion of heart, or new-birth unto righteousness is experienced by him, but rather an increase in iniquity and unholiness. A guilty conscience vexes his soul, and causes him to experience many sorrows. He often feels his heart sad in the midst of laughter: And many times is wretched while he attempts to make those around him believe that he is happy. It may be truly said, every man in this state, is in the gall of bitterness, and in the bond of iniquity. He is far from God, and far from righteousness. An alien from the commonwealth of Israel and a stranger to the covenant of promise.

2. If we are the followers of Christ, it is the business of our life, to seek to grow in grace, and in the knowledge of the Lord Jesus. We are conscious, that we have not yet obtained all that is promised in the scriptures. There are

a thousand things that we have not yet experienced in christianity. It is the desire of our heart to increase with the increase of God. We see heights and depths, lengths and breadths of christian experience, which we have not yet attained. We desire to apprehend that for which we are apprehended of God. To forget the things which are behind, and to reach to those things which are before—But sinners act a different part. They often forget that they have a soul to save. In regard to religion, it may be truly said, “They live without God, and without hope in the world.” They spend their days in vanity, and seem anxious to increase in every thing that makes against their salvation. David declares, the sinner “deviseeth mischief upon his bed; he setteth himself in a way that is not good, he abhorreth not evil.” There is a kind of ambition in many transgressors to exceed in wickedness those that are around them on certain occasions. When they can make use of lying words to divert those that are in their presence, they cheerfully submit to it. It seems the ambition of their life either to grasp after the world with all their heart, or to pursue other things which destroy their peace here, and make them wretched, when they have been engaged in the things which promised them most gratification.

3. If we are christians, we look out for death. We frequently ponder over in our minds the thought of dying. We consider that we are creatures of a day, and may be called in a moment to appear before God. When we retire to rest in an evening, we endeavour to set our house in order, that if death should find us, in the dark shades of the night, we may be found in Christ without spot and blameless. When we leave our habitation in a morning, we reflect on the many accidents that have happened to remove our fellow-creatures, and endeavour to walk with death in our view. By frequently pondering over the subject in our minds, we are enabled to become familiar with it. And whenever we are called to part with our friends, to attend the funerals of our relations, we encourage meditations of our own departure out of this wilderness, and plead with God not to suffer us to die, till we are fitted for a place at his right hand. As a christian is said to walk with God, so in a great measure he may be said to walk with death; but the conduct of sinners is quite the reverse. They dread the thought of bidding adieu to the things that

are seen. Reflections on death and judgment are extremely painful to them. If at any time these press upon their spirits, they endeavour to get quit of them as soon as possible. When they are called to visit their dying relations, or to accompany them to the silent grave, instead of suffering their minds to be employed on the gloomy subjects, which present themselves to view, they divert their attention to other objects, and seem resolved to banish from their hearts, whatever is calculated to disturb their consciences. Even in afflictions they do every thing in their power to fill their minds with hopes of recovery. If they are in danger, and any venture to inform them of it, they are often exceedingly displeased, and reproach the very persons that endeavour to stir them up to seek eternal happiness. If a false friend, or a flatterer, assure them they shall soon recover, and attempt to divert their minds from the subjects that ought to occupy their attention, he is considered their friend, and his company is acceptable. When no visible prospect opens for their recovery, you will frequently find them still banishing the thoughts of death. Many, in this state, imagine prayer to be unnecessary. They will not bear the thought of a serious christian coming to visit them. And it has frequently been known, that those who have been in dying circumstances, have been so blinded to their real state, as to spurn to the last the offers of any that attempted to be of service to them in their distress.

4. The followers of Jesus Christ often wish that they had done with the things that are seen. When they are sorely harrassed with strong temptations, and have a number of difficulties to grapple with, they earnestly desire to have done with the things that are seen, that they may have nothing to do but to glorify God in the heavens for ever. When their souls are abundantly comforted in the love of Christ, and glorious prospects open within the veil, they are ready to cry out, "Come, Lord Jesus Christ, come quickly." They long to be dissolved and to be with their exalted head. It would be abundantly better, in their judgment, to be absent from the body and present with the Lord, than to be absent from him, exposed to a number of temptations in this world. With St. Paul they say, "For me to live is Christ, but to die will be my gain." Sometimes they are obliged both to watch and

and pray against anxiety on this head. If they were to give place to the feelings of their own heart, they should murmur at their Lord's delay. They seek patience and resignation to his will in this matter, and wish that he would deal with them in all things, as infinite wisdom directs. This is not, however, the experience of the ungodly. If the thoughts of death are painful, they cannot be supposed to desire a discharge from this war. If a conversation of death and judgment at a funeral, or when they are afflicted, be so very painful, can we suppose that a single wish is ever found in their heart to leave this world? They dread death above all things. They cannot bear the thought of leaving the things that are seen. As their treasures are here, so their hearts and affections are here also. Their friends and relations, their lands and possessions, their companions and sins, or the customs and maxims of this world, are the object of their desires. These are the idols to which they daily bow. Their whole soul is engrossed with them. It is like death itself to reflect on being separated from them. When any prospect opens of having them removed, or of being removed from them, they are filled with sorrow, and go on softly in the bitterness of their heart. They cannot be pacified, unless their minds are fully persuaded that their idols shall be preserved to them.

5. In the thoughts and desires of death, which the followers of Christ experience, they find their minds quickened to pursue their way to eternal life. Convinced by the scriptures, that without holiness no man shall see the Lord, and that the pure in heart shall only inherit the New Jerusalem, they give diligence to be found in Christ without spot and blameless. It is the business of their life to prepare to meet God. They earnestly intreat the Lord to change them into his own image, from glory to glory, that when it is their lot to die, they may be found meet for the inheritance of the saints in light. They trim the lamps, and prepare to meet the bridegroom of their souls. An holy cheerfulness possesses their minds, while they seek to be found, not having on their own righteousness, which is of the law, but the righteousness which is of God, the faith of our Lord Jesus Christ. Is this the conduct of those who live without hope, and without God in the world? Are they not daily living in the neglect of ever-

duty which the scriptures enjoin? Do they not lead a re-
 probate life in the presence of all that are around them?
 Do they not spurn the offers of the gospel, and cast the
 word of the Lord behind their back? Are they not hasten-
 ing as fast as possible to the regions of despair? Does it not
 appear to be their daily care to treasure up wrath, against
 the day of wrath? In afflictions and death itself, do they
 not continue to harden their hearts, and to despise the of-
 fers of their God? Is it not evident that multitudes de-
 termine to hold it out against the Lord their God, even
 to the last? The minds of the followers of Christ, are
 greatly affected in visiting persons of this description in
 their troubles. They frequently grieve on their account,
 and beseech the Lord in his great mercy to save them.

6. The followers of Christ are enabled to speak com-
 fortably to their friends on their death bed. If any of their
 nearest relations weep and mourn at the prospect of their
 departure, they cry out, "Weep not for us, weep for your-
 selves." We are assured, that "When this earthly house,
 or tabernacle is dissolved, we have a building of God, an
 house not made with hands, eternally in the heavens."
 They declare what God has done for, and what he has
 wrought in them by the power of his Spirit. Their chris-
 tian brethren are frequently edified and blessed in visiting
 them in their trouble. They will venture to warn sinners
 that come into their presence, to fly from the wrath to
 come. Their own relations and friends will be interested
 peculiarly in their dying exhortations and prayers. To
 their partners and children they will give the best advice
 they can administer. If their former exhortations have
 been slighted, they will renew them with greater fervour.
 They will charge them in the name of the Lord Jesus, not
 to trifle any longer, but immediately to lay to heart the
 warnings which belong to their peace. They will warn them
 not to despise their dying counsel, lest they should appear
 as swift witnesses against them at the bar of God. All
 their care is to leave a good savour of Christ behind them
 on all that belong to their house, or that come near them.
 But how different is the state of the ungodly, when their
 end is required at their hand. If their conscience be asleep
 and seared; if they have a delusive hope and a false peace,
 they will express many things on their death bed, which
 sufficiently prove, that they are unfit for a place at the right

hand of God. They will inform their relations, that they have never done any person any harm.—They have paid every one his own.—They have acted honestly between man and man.—They have not altogether neglected their duty in the hurry of business, while at other times they have been diligent in attending upon the worship of God.—They have been as free from sin as any of their neighbours, and far exceeded many of them in every thing that is good.—They have had little failings as well as others, but their attention upon the church and sacrament, are sufficient, they hope, to obtain pardon from God.—If on some occasions they have gone a little too far, their charity to the poor and their readiness to help any of their neighbours in trouble, will more than over balance any thing that has been amiss in their conduct.—As for their part they have no fear of death or hell, for God is merciful, and Christ has died therefore any thing that is deficient in them, will be made up before they leave this world.—If their consciences are truly awake, and they have suitable views of their state and danger, their language will be different from the person alluded to. In the midst of their wretchedness they may complain of what they have done against God, and their own soul. Many in this state, will frankly declare, they have spurned the offers of divine mercy for a number of years, and have sinned against light and knowledge. They have gone beyond the reach of mercy in their crimes, and have nothing to look for but indignation and wrath, tribulation and anguish, at the hands of the Lord. The heavens are as brass to their prayers. They have not the least hope of being saved. Their day of grace is past, and now they must look with horror to the fiery indignation, which God has provided for all his adversaries. With such expressions these, many have terrified their friends on their death beds, and have been so dreadfully sunk beneath guilt and condemnation, as to leave the world without the least hope of being saved.

7. When the followers of Jesus Christ turn their faces to the wall, and bid adieu to their friends, they are as a sheaf of corn, fully prepared for the heavenly garner. The angels of God encamp round about them that fear him, at all times. They are near to bear up our feet while we are marching through this wilderness. They attend as ministering spirits, the heirs of salvation. It is not possible

to imagine how many kind services they accomplish in our behalf, while we are on our journey to the heavenly Canaan. We cannot justly suppose that they will forsake us in our death. Could we see the invisible guards that attend the dying saint, we should be constrained to cry out, "Greater are they that are for him, than all that can oppose."

It is supposed by some, that as soon as the spirit takes flight from the body, the angels of God attend, to conduct it through the regions of the air, which are considered as the place where the god of this world has influence, and that they land it safely in Abraham's bosom. Whether this opinion is only founded in the imagination of divines, or is a fact that we may depend on, is not my business to determine. It is sufficient for us to know, that the God of Jacob will not forsake us, when our heart and flesh fail; but will pass through the valley of the shadow of death with us. His rod and his staff shall comfort, when human help fails. At the same time we have reason to believe, that the angels, sent to be ministering spirits to the heirs of salvation, will afford us every degree of help in their power, when we are called to enter into the world of spirits. If Lazarus was carried by angels to the Paradise of God, have we not reason to hope, that the Lord will confer the same mercy on us, when we are brought into a similar state? If good angels watch around the just man's bed, have we not reason to believe, the fiends of darkness are near to dying sinners? Perhaps the very spirits that have followed them all their days, and have drawn them, by their snares, into a thousand evils. Our adversary, the evil, goes about as a roaring lion, seeking whom he may devour. He leads sinners captive at his pleasure. Millions of infernal spirits may be daily employed in tempting the children of men to violate the laws of God. It is their business to lay snares for our souls. With unwearied diligence they seek our ruin. By night and by day, they are engaged to lead transgressors in the downward road to destruction. If they have been successful in tempting through life, is it reasonable to suppose that they will quit their objects in death? Will they not rather watch with eagerness, when the sinner takes his flight from this world? The dying sinner has no defence from God, to screen him from the influence of those malicious spirits. The angels of God have

no commission to secure him from the rage and malice of the devil. Left in a state of wretchedness, without the least defence from above, the sinner must of necessity fall a victim to his tempters, and be dragged by them to the regions of despair. They will probably seize the departing wretch, and force him to the horrible pit, where destruction and misery are manifest on every side.

8. The spirits of just men, made perfect, will be happy till the morning of the resurrection. The scriptures inform us, that they enter into the joy of their Lord. They are freed from every thing that could disquiet and make them unhappy. They are admitted into such a state of nearness to God, as enables them to triumph continually in his presence. Several passages in the word of God insinuate, that their bliss is not so complete as it will be, when their body is raised from the tomb. That text, in the book of Revelation, which speaks of the souls of the blessed groaning under the altar, till the redemption of their bodies, insinuates, that they are not in the state which they will be raised to, after the Lord Jesus Christ comes to judge the world in righteousness. If they are not so completely blessed as they will be, when the final judgment is passed, we have reason to believe, that nothing in the least disquiets them, in that glorious place, to which they are taken. According to their capacities they are filled with the communicable fulness of God. They are blessed with such glorious communications of the divine presence, that they constantly exult in his mercy. It is probable, new discoveries of the glory of God are communicated, and they keep increasing in holiness and conformity to their living head continually. We have reason to affirm, that all sorrow and sighing is removed from them. They are happy in the enjoyment of what hath not been seen, nor heard, nor can it enter into the mind of man to conceive, what God has laid up for them, in the celestial place. The ungodly are not so. The place of torment, to which they are consigned; the awakening of their own consciences will make them wretched beyond description; the regions of darkness and despair to which they are taken; the company that will surround them; the upbraiding and insult of those that were their companions in wickedness; the torment and misery inflicted by those who were their tempters; and the wrath of God revealed

from heaven to all that are in that wretched place, will cause them to experience extreme pain and misery for ever and ever. The agony of their mind, together with the actual punishment inflicted, will make them more miserable than it is possible for an angel to describe. When they look forward to the day of judgment, and consider all the additional evils they will have to endure, their distress is increased by anticipation. They consider that their body will be raised from the grave, both spiritual and immortal, and that their wretched spirit will be obliged to re-animate again. They feel a thousand pangs in considering the awful state in which they will be plunged, after the final judgment. What they endure in the world of separate spirits, is only like a few drops before the shower. The anxiety of mind they experience from what they already suffer, together with the horrible dread that oppresses them in the prospect that opens to their view, is of such a nature, that we cannot stretch our imagination to conceive a thousandth part of what they endure.

9. In the day when the trumpet shall be sounded, and the dead raised small and great, the followers of the Lord Jesus will triumph in the God of their salvation. Those that have been sleeping in their graves for a number of ages, will rise in a moment, to meet the Prince of Life and glory. And those that are then alive will be changed in the twinkling of an eye, and be caught up to the right hand of their glorious Immanuel. He will make a distinction between the righteous and the wicked. His own followers shall stand with boldness and rejoicing at his right-hand. They will exult in his mercy and love. They will judge himself being their friend, they will be confident in his presence, and rejoice in his salvation. He will look with approbation upon them. He will tell what they have done in his name, and for his sake. He will finish by pronouncing before assembled worlds, "Come, ye blessed of my Father, inherit the kingdom prepared for you from the foundation of the world." But when the trumpet shall sound through all nations, the ungodly shall rise to shame and confusion of face. They shall feel the horrible dread to overwhelm them, which they have so long feared. They will tremble at the prospect of appearing before the Lord Jesus, in their sins and in their blood. They will cry out, "Rocks, fall on us, mountains, hide us,

from the face of him that sitteth on the throne, and from the wrath of the lamb : for the great day of his wrath is come, and who shall be able to stand." Being dragged to the judgment seat of Christ, they must appear at his left hand, and hear him declare, "Go, ye cursed, into everlasting fire, prepared for the devil and his angels." This awful sentence will be proclaimed before all nations and will be attended with awful circumstances to those that are subject to its influence.

10. The righteous shall be taken to the heaven of heavens, to reign with God in glory for ever. They shall be placed in their proper mansions, and be completely happy in body and spirit, through the ages of eternity. God will lead them to living fountains of water, and their tears shall be wiped from their eyes. They shall join the redeemed from every nation under heaven, to sing the song of Moses and the Lamb. They will ever present their crowns before the great Jehovah, crying out, "Worthy is the Lamb that hath loved us, and washed us from our sins in his blood, to receive honour and riches, blessing and praise for ever and ever." But the wicked shall be driven away in their wickedness, and in body and spirit shall be tormented day and night, in the presence of God and in the presence of the holy angels. They will have to endure the pains of the second death. Their misery will be complete. They will have no rest for ever, and will groan beneath their guilt and punishment, world without end.

Let us conclude by a few remarks :

The Lord Jehovah, does not will our death. He will be gracious to our souls. If we turn to him with our heart, he will have mercy upon us, and abundantly pardon. He will make his goodness to pass before us, and his truth shall be a shield to our souls. As a father pitieth his children, and provides for them every thing that is necessary, so the Lord pitieth them that fear him.

If we make it the business of our life to secure an interest in the Lord Jesus, God will rejoice to do us good. He will take pleasure in supplying all our wants. He will on all occasions bless and comfort our souls. He will change us into his own image, from glory to glory. We shall be guided by his counsel through all the difficulties of life, and he will support us in death, and raise us to a

at his own right hand. We shall have every blessing we need in our passage through life; every necessary support in the valley of the shadow of death; every blessing we are capable of receiving in the world of separate spirits will be imparted; in the day of judgment God will own us for his followers, and pronounce us blessed; and will reward us in his kingdom through the countless ages of a vast eternity.

Should any refuse to turn to the Lord while he is waiting to be gracious, and harden themselves against the voice of his word, they will have to endure all that is threatened in the scriptures. The Lord will avenge himself of his adversaries. He will cause all the vials of his wrath to be poured upon them, and they shall endure "Indignation and wrath, tribulation and anguish," according to the threatenings of the scriptures. They shall be banished from the presence of God, and the glory of his power forever.

May the Lord Jehovah have mercy upon us all, and grant us his salvation! May he help us by his Spirit to renounce whatever is contrary to his blessed will, that we may have refuge in Christ, and be happy in his love! May he bless us with that faith which works by love, and purifies the heart, that we may be bold in the approach of death, and saved with an everlasting salvation! May we be able to witness a good confession, that God may be glorified in us, whether it be by life or by death; and that we all may be glorified with him through the ages of ages, to adore redeeming love, and be completely happy in that celestial kingdom, which cannot be moved! God grant us these mercies, and to him shall be ascribed all the praise, eternally! Amen.

END OF THE THIRD SERMON.

The following Extracts will be acceptable to all that love the Religion of Jesus. They are suitable to the subjects we have been considering.

E X T R A C T S

From letters sent to a friend, on the loss of a beloved Boy, who was killed, with many others, by the fall of a building, on the 13th February, 1796.

“UPON this awful, melancholy occasion, I freely mingle a tear with your’s. Reason and scripture, nature and God, forbid us not to mourn on such occasions. Only let us not grieve *immoderately*. It is granted, he was a most desirable and promising youth, and his death very sudden; but can it be doubted that his sudden death was not sudden glory? Then let us moderate our sorrow: nay, I had almost said, let us rejoice together, that the dear boy is removed from a world of sin and sorrow, into a world where neither can enter.

You are now called upon to prove the reality of your religious principles. The Lord is now trying you in a very tender point, and expects submission from you. Remember it is the Lord that has done it: he knows what is best for you. He has only taken one out of many. Oh! provoke him not by immoderate sorrow, lest he strike again and again. May he give you power to believe that what he does, or permits to be done, is the very best for you! And may you feel such a sweet resignation to his will herein, that with pious Job you may say, “The Lord gave, and the Lord hath taken away, but still blessed be his name!” May the God of love support and comfort you both, that you may strive to comfort each other!—And may you both come out of the furnace like gold well purified!”

FEB. 15, 1796.

A second letter from the same person:—“You are still in the vale of affliction, sorrowing for the loss of your dear child. Yet I hope by this time the pungency of your sorrow

sorrow is abated, and you now begin to see the hand of an all-wise God in that awful dispensation of providence. Indeed while we look at second causes only, our minds will be continually distressed, and will our sorrow be alleviated. We shall still grope in the dark, and remain comfortless. But is there not a way whereby we may be delivered from the gloomy abyfs? Surely there is! Blessed be God for the revelation of his will to man, by his beloved Son. We are there told, that *the very hairs of our head are all numbered*; and that *not a sparrow falls to the ground without his notice*, or permission. Now, my dear friends, believe this gracious declaration of God with your heart, and you will find a degree of blessed resignation to his will, and divine comfort to arise in your soul.

"I have been reading Mr. Law's Serious Call. I shall extract a passage from it, for your attentive perusal: "We are as sure that nothing happens by chance, as that the world itself was not made by chance. We are certain that all things happen, and work together for good, as that God is goodness itself. So that a man has as much reason to *will* every thing that happens to him, because God *wills* it, as to think that is wisest, which is directed by infinite wisdom. Now this is not cheating or soothing ourselves into any false content, or imaginary happinss; but is a satisfaction grounded upon as great a certainty, as the being and attributes of God. For if we are right in believing God to act over us with infinite wisdom and goodness, we cannot carry our notions of conformity and resignation to the divine will too high: nor can we ever be deceived by thinking that to be best for us, which God has brought upon us. There is nothing that so powerfully governs the heart, as a true sense of God's presence; and nothing can keep us constantly under so lively a sense of the presence of God, as this holy resignation, which attributes every thing to him, and receives every thing as from him." I would recommend the whole chapter to your serious consideration.

"Many of the dispensations of God's providence toward his creatures in this world, are an unfathomable deep. But when the great drama shall be unravelled, what we now call misfortunes, evil accidents, or what else, shall then be proved to have been blessings in disguise, and intended to promote our best interest. Happy will it be for those in that day, who shall be found to have received and improved them,

them, according to the intention of God in permitting them to befall us ! I hope my next intelligence from — will inform me that you not only acquiesce, but rejoice in the will of God toward you."

MARCH 13, 1796.

From another friend :—" I have felt and do feel most sensibly for your heavy affliction. My soul has been engaged much in prayer for you. I trust the Lord has supported you, and that you can justify the ways of providence in saying, "*He has done all things well!*" He has a right to take his creatures to himself by what means his infinite and unerring wisdom sees good. We have been tried in a similar way. I thought, was the Lord pleased to take our boy by the common death of his creatures, I could bear it better, but he has given me to see, that he is the Sovereign of the World, and as good as he is great. Therefore I am willing that he should do as seemeth him good. I hope I am now willing he should go to heaven God's way.

When we heard of your very great affliction, alas ! little did we then know that we should have a fellow-feeling with you, not in theory only, but in a similar way ! What can we say to these things ? We must hold our peace, and hide ourselves in the dust. The Lord gave. They were his property, and he had a right to take them from us, in any manner his unerring wisdom pleased. We may mourn but must not murmur. Faith says, "*He does all things well.*" Indeed the stroke was severe ; but although he has taken one from you, and one from me, yet he has not taken *all*, as he did from Job, a greater character. Our dear boy presents himself with his lovely countenance, and childish prattle, but we put him away ; and in this would learn the art of forgetfulness. But I will quit this painful subject as it only tears open the wounds, and makes them bleed afresh, which is not forgetfulness, but painful memory.

FEB. and MARCH, 1796.

Another friend writes :—" I am exceedingly sorry to hear of that most distressing trial, which the Lord has permitted to come upon you. But what shall we say to these things ? *The Lord gave, and the Lord hath taken away. Blessed be the name of the Lord.* He, we well know, is infinitely wise in all his ways. He has a right to resume

gifts in what way he thinks proper, and therefore on such distressing occasions, we can only say, *I was dumb, because thou didst it.* It becomes us on every occasion patiently to submit to whatever we may meet with in the course of providence. No doubt the Lord hath a wise and gracious design, hath some blessed end to serve in suffering you to be so severely exercised. But perhaps it may be said to you, *what I do thou knowest not how, but thou shalt know hereafter.* I hope that our gracious Lord, whose permissive hand is in the rod, will lay his everlasting arms beneath you, and mercifully support and comfort under the painful dispensation. He surely will give suffering grace for suffering times, and you shall witness the truth of that word, my grace is sufficient for thee.

I was glad to hear that your dear boy was careful to go to prayer before he went out of the house. Here is ground for comfort. May you not see through this dark cloud the hand of a kind and gracious God, cutting short his work in righteousness, and taking your dear child to his throne? Have you not good reason to believe that he has joined the shining hosts above, and is this moment singing praises to God and the Lamb? Read the 3d of Mrs. Rowe's Letters from the Dead to the Living.

"Perhaps infinite wisdom foresaw, that either some very distressing trial awaited this child, or that had he lived long in the world, he might have been betrayed into some dreadful evil, or being ready for that happy world, the grand purposes of life, with respect to him were all answered, and when this is the case, it is nothing worth speaking of, whether our days upon earth are many or few. I cannot help saying, Oh, happy! happy! highly favoured boy! who hast escaped this troublesome world, and far from all danger, art everlastingly happy in the full enjoyment of God! We well know that no affliction for the present is joyous. I can easily perceive that painful reflections will steal upon you, except you are receiving continual help from God. But he is always near, always ready to help, and you will know that fervent prayer will reach his ear, and faith will bring you all the help you want.

"Perhaps this lovely boy may now to the end of your days, be appointed of God as your guardian angel, and may

do you ten thousand kind offices throughout the whole of your life : And may also be the first happy spirit, who may attend you in your dying moments, and may also conduct you to your Father's house above. Then, oh! then, my friends shall see the reason, why they were suffered to bear so heavy a stroke, and suffer so deep an affliction."

FEB. 23, 1796.



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